R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NEGRO AND WHITE DROPOUTS IN SELECTED CONNECTICUT HIGH SCHOOLS.

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PUB DATE 59

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$2.28 55P.

DESCRIPTORS- *COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS, *DROPOUTS, *RACIAL DIFFERENCES, NEGRO STUDENTS, CAUCASIAN STUDENTS, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, DROPOUT CHARACTERISTICS, FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS, DATA, DROPOUT ATTITUDES, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, STUDENT ADJUSTMENT, ASPIRATION, VOCATIONAL INTERESTS, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY,

REPORTED ARE THE FINDINGS OF A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NEGRO AND WHITE DROPOUTS FROM 12 JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN FOUR CONNECTICUT CITIES IN WHICH 60 PERCENT OF THE NEGRO POPULATION RESIDES. DATA WERE OBTAINED FROM SCHOOL RECORDS AND HOME INTERVIEWS WITH NEGRO AND WHITE DROPOUTS AND NONDROPOUTS. IT WAS FOUND THAT IN 1956-57 14 PERCENT OF THE NEGRO AND 9 PERCENT OF THE WHITE PUPILS DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL, PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF "LACK OF INTEREST," "FINANCIAL" REASONS, OR "POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE." THE OVERALL NEGRO DROPOUT RATE WAS GREATER THAN THAT OF WHITES. APPROXIMATELY TWO-THIRDS OF THOSE WHO DROPPED OUT HAD PLANS FOR CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION, AND ABOUT HALF WISHED THEY HAD STAYED IN SCHOOL. SOME OF THE FINDINGS OF THE COMPARISON OF THE DROPOUTS AND NONDROPOUTS SHOWED THAT--(1) THERE WAS MORE FAMILY INSTABILITY AMONG DROPOUTS IN GENERAL, AND MORE AMONG NEGROES IN PARTICULAR, (2) THERE WERE MORE DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS AND MORE ABSENTEEISM AMONG DROPOUTS, (3) THE COURSE OF STUDY OF THE DROPOUTS TENDED TO BE CONCENTRATED IN GENERAL OR INDUSTRIAL ARTS FOR THE BOYS AND GENERAL OR COMMERCIAL COURSES FOR THE GIRLS, AND (4) IQ SCORES WERE LOWER FOR DROPOUTS AND LOWER FOR NEGROES THAN WHITES. ALSO, SUCH ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AS FAMILY STABILITY, LONG RESIDENCE IN THE STATE, AND HIGHER FAMILY INCOME SEEMED TO BE RELATED TO HIGHER ACADEMIC AVERAGES AMONG THE NEGRO RESPONDENTS. (JL)

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

This is a racial comparative study of white and Negro pupils who dropped out of 12 junior and senior high schools located in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury, Connecticut during the school year 1956-57. About 60% of the Negro population of the state resides in these four cities. Also included, for control purposes, were samples of the Negro and white pupils who were continuing to attend school (the non-dropouts). Data were secured from two principal sources: (1) the school records of 1055 pupils, about equally divided among the white and Negro dropouts and white and Negro non-dropouts; and (2) home interviews with 80% of the 1055 pupils, also about equally divided among the white and Negro dropouts, and white and Negro non-dropouts.

The overall Negro dropout rate was about 60% greater than that of whites. During the year 1956-57 about 14% of the Negro and 9% of the white pupils dropped out of school. In both races, about 58% were boys and 42% were girls.

Half of the Negro dropouts leave at age 16, compared with 40% of the whites.

Three-fourths of the Negro dropouts had resided in Connecticut at least ten years which meant that a large majority had received most of their schooling in a racially integrated school system.

"Lack of interest," "financial" reasons, and "poor academic performance" were the principal over-all reasons cited by dropouts for leaving school. The principal exception appeared among Negro girls who cited "pregnancy or marriage" as the principal reason in about 30% of the cases.

The majority of white and Negro parents tried to prevail upon their sons to continue schooling, but were more inclined to allow their daughters to make their own decisions to leave.

White pupils tended to discuss their decisions to leave school more frequently with their fathers than any other person. Negro pupils were at a disadvantage in this respect because of the larger incidence of broken homes. White pupils also tended to discuss their decisions with school personnel more frequently than did the Negro pupils.

Negro dropouts to a greater extent than whites seemed to be conscious of the importance of securing a high school diploma.

About two-thirds of both the white and Negro boys who dropped out had some future plans for continuing their education. About half of all the dropouts wished that they had stayed in school.

Thirty percent of the Negro boys, compared with 20% of the white

boys who dropped out were unemployed. In both groups, 23% were, or had been, in the armed services.

Negro dropouts, more frequently than whites, were employed at unskilled jobs. More than half of the white girls who dropped out had been working at clerical jobs, compared with only 4% of the Negro girls.

There was a higher correlation between vocational aspirations and actual jobs held among the whites than among the Negroes who left school, particularly in the area of clerical occupations.

Among the non-dropouts, the vocational aspirations of Negroes were very similar to those of whites. The majority of the boys aspired to professional or skilled occupations; the majority of the girls aspired to professional or clerical occupations.

There was more family instability, in the sense of homes broken by separation or divorce, among dropouts than non-dropouts; and more among Negroes than whites.

There was more residential mobility among Negroes than whites, in the sense that the families had moved more frequently since the children entered first grade.

Dropouts, more than non-dropouts, tended to have more brothers or sisters living at home. Negroes also exceeded whites in this regard.

The level of education acquired by at least one parent was higher among non-dropouts than dropouts. Parents of Negro dropouts tended to be better educated than those of white dropouts. On the other hand, among non-dropouts, white parents tended to be better educated than Negro parents.

In Negro families of dropouts and non-dropouts alike, the principal wage-earner was usually engaged in a semi-skilled or unskilled occupation. Consistent with this, lower incomes were found more frequently among Negro than white families.

Family income was more closely correlated with education of parents among whites than Negroes. In fact, in white families where the parents had not gone beyond grammer school the total income distribution was about the same as that of Negro families in which at least one parent was a high school or college graduate.

Although pupils who left school were more dissatisfied with the subjects they had studied than were those who remained, Negro pupils—both dropouts and non-dropouts – were more satisfied than white pupils.

Among the non-dropouts, 60% of the whites and 70% of the Negroes felt that they got along well with all of their teachers. Thus it seems that the majority of Negro and white pupils have good relationships with their teachers within the context of a racially integrated system. A similar situation existed in regard to relationships with classmates, with even larger majorities of both whites and Negroes feeling that they got along well with each other.

Dropouts tended to have a lower rate of participation in extra-curri-

cular activities than non-dropouts; and whites tended to have a lower rate than Negroes.

Absenteeism was higher among dropouts than non-dropouts, and higher among Negroes than whites.

Disciplinary problems occurred more frequently among dropouts than non dropouts. Over-all differences, on the basis of race, were relatively slight.

As far as over-all school adjustment was concerned, Negro and white pupils received virtually identical ratings from school personnel.

In regard to fields of study, among dropouts the boys tended to be concentrated in the general or industrial arts courses, and the girls in general or commercial cources. Relatively few of the dropouts of either race were taking college preparatory work.

However, among the pupils who remained in school, the gap between the races is more sharply defined. White pupils were enrolled about three times as frequently as Negroes in the college preparatory curriculum. On the other hand, Negroes were enrolled in the general or industrial arts curriculum about twice as frequently as whites.

During their last year in school, Negroes had failed more subjects than whites. Negroes also had to repeat whole grades more frequently than whites.

Intelligence quotients, based principally on group intelligence tests, were on the average lower for dropouts than non-dropouts, and lower for Negroes than whites. However, the *range* of intelligence quotients was quite similar for both racial groups. Although intelligence tests are designed to measure the ability to learn, performance on such tests is not necessarily a measure of native or inherited ability, but instead is regarded as correlated with a variety of socio-economic factors which differentiate one racial group from another.

In regard to such background differences between whites and Negroes, we found that Negro pupils who had lived in Connecticut more than ten years tended to have a higher average I.Q. than those who had resided in the state less than ten years.

Also, Negro pupils with a stable family background tended to have a higher average I.Q. than pupils coming from broken homes.

Children of parents who had graduated from high school or college had a higher average I.Q. than those of parents who had only attended grammar school. However, this difference in level of education of the parents seemed to be more closely related to the average I.Q. of white than Negro pupils.

White collar occupations of parents, and higher family income seemed to be associated with a higher average I.Q. of the pupils, though the relationship seemed more pronounced in the case of white than Negro respondents.

White pupils more frequently than Negroes also tended to have

higher averages in their course work, both among dropouts and non-dropouts.

Environmental factors such as family stability and long residence in the state were associated with higher academic averages of Negro respondents. Also, higher family income seemed to be more closely related to higher academic average than to the average I.Q. of Negro respondents.

The rate of participation in extra-curricular activities was consistently greater for pupils having higher academic averages – both white and Negro.

Pupils who aspired to the professions did a better grade of academic work than the rank and file of their classmates. However, aspirations of the white pupils in this respect seemed to be better matched with academic performance than was true of the Negro pupils.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This *Comparative Study of Negro and White Dropouts in Selected Connecticut High Schools* was conducted by the Research Division of the Connecticut State Commission on Civil Rights. The membership of the Research Committee of the Commission consists of Elmo Roper, chairman, Ray O'Connor, and Rabbi Morris Silverman.

The Civil Rights Commission acknowledges the cooperation of the superintendents of the Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury school systems, and of the principals, teachers and guidance counsellers in the 12 schools within these systems who made data available from the school records. It acknowledges the helpful advice given by Dr. J. Raymond Gerberich, Directer of the Bureau of Educational Research and Service of the University of Connecticut, and of Dr. Ellis D. Tooker, Directer of the Bureau of Guidance and Pupil Adjustment of the Hartford Board of Education. It acknowledges the valuable suggestions given by members of the firm of Elmo Roper and Associates of New York City. However, responsibility for the findings and their interpretation is assumed by the Commission.

The study was directed, and the final manuscript prepared by Dr. Henry G. Stetler, Research Superviser. Valuable assistance in the preparation of schedules and the gathering of data was rendered by William Yudkin, former Research Field Representative, who also supervised the work of the field interviewers. John Kleszy, instructor at the Bullard-Havens Technical school, Bridgeport, also participated in various phases of the study during the summers of 1957 and 1958. Assistance in the processing of data was given by Mrs. Mona Backlund.

I: INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken by the Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights for the purpose of making an intensive exploration of the facts and circumstances incidental to the early withdrawal of Negro pupils from public schools prior to completion of at least a high school education. The Commission assumed that the Negro rate of withdrawals would probably exceed that of white pupils. It felt the need for determining the reasons for such withdrawals, and whether there were significant differences between Negro and white pupils in their reasons for leaving school.

Although public education has been available in Connecticut to members of all races on an integrated basis since 1868, school attendance is compulsory only for persons under 16 years of age. On the average, pupils reach the age of 16 during their tenth grade of schooling. Persons who leave with only this minimum of formal schooling will find many avenues of advancement requiring at least high school graduation closed to them. As for further advancement in business, industry, and the professions, the acquisition of a high school diploma is merely a pre-requisite to the higher education or training required for such careers.

A comparison of the occupational distribution of the Negro and white population shows a concentration of Negroes in the types of jobs requiring a minimum of education or training. In Connecticut in 1950, whites were engaged four times as frequently as Negroes in the white collar (professional, managerial and proprietary, and clerical) occupations, and twice as frequently as Negroes in the skilled occupations. On the other hand, Negroes were engaged twice as frequently as whites in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. (See table 1.)

TABLE 1

OCCUPATIONS IN CONNECTICUT: 1950
(U.S. Census: 1950, Table 77)

	White	Negro
	796,000	21,000
	(100%)	(100%)
White Collar (Professional, Managerial and Proprietary and clerical)	43	10
Skilled	18	9
Semi-skilled and unskilled	39	81

Racial differences in occupational distribution may be the result of either *discriminatory* or *selective* factors – or both. Discriminatory practices could operate in several ways. They could deprive Negroes of adequate education by requiring them to attend segregated schools, of adequate training by excluding them from apprenticeship programs, of employment, or of promotion to jobs for which they were qualified. Selection would operate in situations where Negroes simply did not meet the requirements for jobs, regardless of the causes for such failure.

The Research Problem

Withdrawals from school have been a frequent subject of study by educators in recent years.[1] These studies invariably show that a substantial proportion of persons entering high school never graduate. For example, a recent study based on experiences in the Hartford school system demonstrated that the enrollment of the ninth grade entering class in 1950 had decreased by 37.3% at the time of graduation in 1954.[2] Also, the Federal Office of Education recently reported that 37.5% of the pupils who enrolled in high schools in the United States in 1947 did not graduate in 1951.[3]

These studies, though aware that racial or ethnic differences may affect the withdrawal rate, rarely if ever present any detailed analysis based on racial differentiation. The reasons for this avoidance may be in part a reluctance of educational researchers to approach a problem so highly charged with emotion, controversy, and even political implications; or in part an unwillingness to focus attention upon a particular minority group; or in part the inherently difficult research problems involved in working with data that are not identified by race in the school records. Despite the net gain achieved in an integrated educational system, such as is found in Connecticut and other northern states, wherein pupils are treated as *individuals* rather than as Negroes and whites, these systems can neither control the conditions from which their pupil emerge, nor the communities into which they are thrown after leaving school. Identification with a particular race – Negro or white – involves a complex of psychological, social, economic, and cultural factors which, in addition to any physical characteristics, may significantly affect the individual's life adjustment. The central purpose therefore of this study will be to focus attention on the extent to which any of these factors, either by itself or in combination with others, tends to differentiate Negro from white pupils who drop out of school.

School withdrawals, in the broadest sense, include all pupils who sever their connection with a particular school. However, those pupils who merely transfer to another school, town, or state are not included within the scope of our inquiry. Rather we shall be concerned with those pupils who, according to school records, dropped out of school entirely, and at the time of our inquiry were not pursuing any full-time course of instruction in any public or private school.

Our research task encompasses, therefore:

(a) a compilation of comparative dropout rates of Negro and white pupils in a selected group of Connecticut high and junior high schools. The determination of such comparative rates is essential in the absence of any published or unpublished data.

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   McCreary, William H., Kitch, Donald E., *Now Hear Youth*. California State Department of Education. 1953.
   Work Conference on Life Adjustment Education, *Why Do Boys and Girls Drop Out of School*. Washington, Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1953.
2. Tooker, Ellis D., *Fact-Finding Study of Drop-Outs From Hartford Public Schools* (mimeo.) Hartford, Board of Education, 1955.
3. Gaumnitz, Walter H., *High School Retention by States*. Washington, Circular 398, Office of Education, U.S., Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1954.

(b) a determination of the characteristics (personal, intellectual, academic, extra-curricular, economic, familial, etc.) of Negro and white dropouts, and the differences, if any, between the groups. For the purpose of pointing up the characteristics of the dropouts, we shall compare them with control groups of Negro and white pupils who did not leave school.

(c) an analysis and evaluation of any significant differences between the characteristics of Negro and white pupils who leave school, and between the characteristics of Negro pupils who leave school and those who continue their high school education.

The execution of this research project in the Connecticut locale is of particular value because it permits comparisons of Negro and white pupils to be made in a state where an enlightened tradition in civil rights legislation has achieved some tangible results in working toward the goal of equality of opportunity, regardless of race.

The research procedure

Since the Negro population of Connecticut is concentrated in highly urbanized areas, four of the larger cities – Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, and Waterbury – were selected as the areas from which we would secure our sample of Negro dropouts. Sixty percent of the state's Negro population resided in these cities according to the 1950 U.S. census, thereby constituting a fairly representative cross-section. The inclusion of additional cities, each with relatively small proportions of the total Negro population, would have involved an expenditure of time and funds disproportionate to the possible yield of additional cases.

The school year 1956-57 was selected as the time interval to be covered. All data from school records were gathered for this year, both for dropouts and for the non-dropout control groups, and all data gathered by interviews were related to this particular year.

Within each of the cities, the high or junior high schools selected were those with the largest proportions of Negro pupils, thereby insuring a maximum yield of dropout cases. In all, ten high schools and two junior high schools were included. In several of the cities it was advisable to include at least one junior high school with a substantial proportion of Negro pupils because some of them were known to leave school at the end of the ninth year without entering a senior high school.

In each of the schools, the first step was to secure a list of names and addresses of all pupils who had withdrawn from school during 1956-57. These lists were then narrowed down by exculding pupils who had merely transferred to other schools. The names of the pupils who had dropped out voluntarily were retained. Connecticut schools have a "withdrawal code" or system for classifying, on the school records, persons who leave school. Of the 11 categories into which all withdrawals are classified, we selected the pupils who had (1) "left school after becoming sixteen," (2) "left school to work after receiving employment certificate," or (3) "left school to enter military service" (enlistments). Although these categories as such provided us with very few clues as to

the reasons for withdrawal, they did provide us with the universe of persons who had severed their connection with the schools.

Racial identification

Our next step was the problem of identifying the Negro and white pupils on these lists. Connecticut school records generally include no identification of pupils on the basis of their race, religion, or national origin.

Since these lists included more white cases than we planned to include in our sample, it was essential to ascertain the number of Negro cases and then match them with an equivalent white sample. The Negro cases were identified principally through consultations with guidance counselors, home room teachers, and office secretaries. Also, wherever possible, we secured the best possible estimate of all Negro pupils in attendance in order to have a base for calculating the dropout rate. Lists of Negro students available in a few of the schools facilitated the identification.

The sample

At the outset, we hoped to obtain a minimum of 200 Negro dropouts, equally divided by sex. As it turned out, we finally identified a total of 234 Negro dropouts, from the 12 schools in four cities. After the Negro dropouts were identified in each school, we drew a sample of white dropouts, matching the Negro cases by class and by sex. For example, if ten Negroes and 30 whites dropped out of the tenth grade in a particular school, we selected every third white case in order to secure a comparable number of white cases. Usually a slightly larger number of white cases were drawn as a precaution against the later discovery that some of the cases might be impossible to locate for interviewing.

Although a comparison of Negro and white pupils who left school would be valuable, per se, it was felt that the characterization of these groups would be more meaningful if shown in relation to similar characteristics of pupils who were continuing their education. For this purpose, it was decided to select a sample control group of non-dropouts for both Negro and white pupils. This again involved the problem of identifying Negro and white pupils in the total student bodies of the schools. The samples eventually drawn were proportionate to the school, grade, and sex characteristics of the original Negro dropout group. A total of approximately 250 non-dropout pupils in each racial group was selected in order to insure eventual interview samples of at least 200 cases.

As far as being representative is concerned, the Negro dropout group included virtually the complete universe of Negro pupils who had left school during 1956-57 in the four cities. Together with the Negro non-dropout sample, matched by school, grade, and sex, the Negro cases on

4. Sixty percent of the State's Negro population resides in the four cities. Also, the predominantly urban character of the Negro population is indicated by the fact that 84 percent of the State's Negro population resides in the 12 largest cities, whereas only 49 percent of the State's white population resides in these same cities.

the whole can be regarded as representative not only of the Negro population in the four cities, but also in the entire State.[4] The white samples, both dropout and non-dropout, matched by school, grade, and sex with the Negro group can be regarded as representative of the white population residing in the four cities. However, they are probably not as wholly representative of the state's white population because many white pupils attend high schools in areas where very few Negroes reside. Such schools were not included within the scope of this study because of the relatively low potential yield of Negro cases. Also, some of these schools located in suburban areas would include pupils from families in the higher income and higher educated segments of the white population.

Data from school records

After making our identification of Negro pupils from the school lists in each of the ten high and two junior high schools and then drawing the sample of Negro non-dropouts and white dropouts and non-dropouts, we proceeded to examine the school records of these pupils. Permission to make such examination had in all instances been secured from the school superintendents. We then worked in active cooperation with school personnel, including principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and others who could assist us in obtaining comparable data on Negro and white dropouts and non-dropouts from the schools' permanent records. The following types of data were secured from this source:

The reason given, and date of leaving; age, and grade at time of leaving school (for dropouts only).
Age, and grade attending (for non-dropouts only).
Birth-date and birth-place.
Occupation of father and mother.
Course in which enrolled.
Subjects failed, and grades repeated.
Type of intelligence test administered; date of test; and intelligence test score.
Other tests administered (achievement, aptitude, etc.) with dates and scores.
Overall academic average, and average for each complete semester in attendance.
Number of days absent (last full year of attendance for dropouts).
Number of older and younger brothers and sisters living at home.
Number of extra-curricular activities.
Guidance counselor's appraisal of school adjustment, and frequency of disciplinary problems (if any).
Physical defects (if any).
Vocational interests, and after-school plans.
Employment referrals, and work experience.

In all, these data would represent what were most tangible, comprehensive, and relevant to our problem, from the standpoint of the school. Some would probably be highly useful; others would have limited utility because of differences in the types of records maintained in the various schools.

Interviews

Interview schedules were administered in the homes of dropouts and non-dropouts by interviewers trained by research personnel of the Commission on Civil Rights. As the practice has been in past research projects of the Commission, these interviewers were recruited from the various communities where the respondents reside. In the present study, Negroes interviewed Negro respondents, and whites interviewed white respondents. All interviewers were given specific written and oral instructions to insure comparability in responses. Since specific persons had to be interviewed, it was anticipated that the dropouts would represent a more mobile population than the non-dropouts. In many instances, frequent callbacks were necessary, especially during the evening hours, in order to complete the interviews. All of the interviews were secured during the first six months of 1958.

Schedules administered to dropouts included the following types of questions:

What have you been doing since leaving school?

What jobs have you held since leaving school? Hourly pay?

How come you left school before you graduated?

How many extra-curricular activities did you participate in?

Which of the following best describes your family situation?
(a) You live with your father and mother.
(b) Your parents are separated and you live with your father, or (c) your mother.
(d) One of your parents is dead and you live with ———.
(e) Both of your parents are dead and you live with ———.
(f) You are maried and live in your own home, or (g) with your parents.
(h) Other

What grade were you in when you first thought of leaving school?

How would you describe your parents' reaction to your leaving school?

With whom did you talk over your decision to leave school?

What sort of advice did you get?

Was your leaving influenced by your friends in the neighborhood who had gone to work?

Which of the following best describes your feeling about leaving school?
(a) I am glad I left.
(b) I wished I had stayed.
(c) I didn't have much choice because I had to leave.
(d) I am not sure that I did the right thing.
(e) I never gave it much thought.

What did you think of your classmates at school? Would you say that you
(a) Got along well with all of them.

(b) Got along well with some of them.
(c) Couldn't get along well with most of them.
(d) Couldn't get along with any of them.

How did you feel about the subjects you studied your last year in school? Would you say that
(a) You liked all of them.
(b) You liked most of them.
(c) You liked only a few of them.
(d) You didn't like any of them.

Do you feel there were subjects you should have been learning which are not taught in school?

In your relationships with your teachers, do you feel that
(a) You got along well with all of them.
(b) You got along well with most of them.
(c) You got along well with all but one of them.
(d) You couldn't get along with most of them.
(e) You couldn't get along with any of them.

How many of your teachers really seemed to care about you as a person?

What did you like best about going to school?

Thinking over all the different things about school – your friends, your activities, your classes, and your teachers – what would you say is the chief thing you didn't like so well about it?

Do you feel that you had any special problems outside school?

What, if anything, would have encouraged you to stay in school?

How important do you think it is to graduate from high school?

Do you have any plans to complete your high school education?

Are you sorry you left school?

All in all, thinking over what we've been talking about, what would you say was the main reason for your leaving school?

Interviewers were instructed to ask the following questions of a parent, guardian, or other adult in the household of the dropout:

How do you feel about your son (daughter) leaving school? Would you say that
(a) You wanted him to stay in school and tried to get him to stay.
(b) You wanted him to stay in school but left the decision up to him.
(c) It made no difference to you if he stayed or left.
(d) You felt it was best for him to leave school.

What do you feel was the chief reason for your son (daughter) leaving school?

How important do you think it is for a person to graduate from high school?

(a) Very important for all students.
(b) Important for some students but not for others.
(c) Not really very important.

What is your relationship to the dropout (mother, father etc.)?

All schedules also included requests for the following factual data to be secured from a parent or guardian:

Birthplace of student.

How long has student lived in Connecticut?

How many times has the student moved since entering first grade?

Do you own or rent your home?

How many older and younger brothers and sisters are living at home?

Did any of them leave school before graduation?

Occupation of student's father and mother?

Approximate weekly family income?

Highest grade of school completed by father and mother.

Schedules with similar questions were administered to the non-drop-outs and their parents with the exception that all questions relating to reasons for leaving school, and experiences after leaving school, were deleted as non-applicable.

II. THE PUPILS WHO WITHDREW FROM SCHOOL

Our comparison of the characteristics and experiences of pupils who withdrew from high schools in four Connecticut cities during the school year 1956-57 is based on data secured from 234 Negro and 267 white respondents. The schools included Bassick, Central, and Warren Harding senior high schools in Bridgeport; Hartford Public and Weaver senior high, and Northeast junior high school in Hartford; Hillhouse and Wilbur Cross senior high, and Troup junior high schools in New Haven; and Crosby, Leavenworth, and Wilby senior high schools in Waterbury. These schools were selected because as a group they contained the largest concentration of Negro pupils in the state, which in turn would yield the largest number of dropouts. In addition, we secured data from a control group of 283 Negro and 271 white pupils who were continuing their high school education – the non-dropouts.

Two principal sources of data were utilized: school records, and interviews. School record data were secured for all pupils, supplemented with data from home interviews with parents and/or pupils for 80% of the cases. (See table 2.) Inability to locate the respondent at a given address was the principal reason for failure to secure interviews, especially among dropouts. Outright refusal to be interviewed occurred in only about 2% of the cases.

Table 2

SOURCES OF DATA: DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUTS, BY RACE.

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts		Total
	White	Negro	White	Negro	
	267	234	271	283	1055
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
School record, and interview with pupil and parent	62	62	71	78	69
School record, and interview with parent only	14	20	4	6	10
School record, and interview with pupil only	2	1	2	1	1
School record exclusively	22	17	23	15	20

Dropout rates

Negro pupils dropped out of school at a rate about 60% greater than whites.

During 1956-57, more than 14% of the Negroes compared with less than 9% of the whites withdrew from the ten senior high schools located in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven and Waterbury.[5] All of these high schools are racially integrated,[6] with a composite white-Negro ratio of about ten to one. (See table 3.) None of the senior high schools had more than 20% nor less than 3% Negro pupils. Of the two junior high schools also covered in this study, one had 20%, and the other 80%

5. Junior high schools are excluded in the calculation of this rate because most pupils in the 7th and 8th grades are under 16 years of age. In these schools, dropouts occur chiefly in the 9th grade.
6. In fact, all public schools in Connecticut are racially integrated except in towns having no Negro population.

Negro pupils. The latter concentration resulted from the school's location in a predominantly Negro residential area. However, only 15% of our Negro dropout cases were drawn from this school.

Table 3

PERCENT OF DROPOUTS IN TEN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, 1956-57, BY RACE

	Total	White	Negro
School population	15,477 (100%)	13,997 (100%)	1,480 (100%)
Dropouts	9.3	8.8	14.3

Sex distribution

Both Negro and white boys drop out of school more frequently than girls. Among the Negroes, 58% were boys and 42% were girls. White dropouts seem to follow a similar pattern, based on a sex distribution of all[7] white pupils who withdrew from four of the larger schools located in Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. This sex ratio is consistent with the findings of an earlier study of the Hartford schools,[8] and with a study of schools in five mid-western cities.[9]

Age and grade at time of leaving

Whites, more frequently than Negroes, leave school immediately upon reaching age 16 when school attendance is no longer compulsory. About 60% of the white dropouts, compared with about half of the Negroes, leave at this age. Thus a larger proportion of the Negro dropouts wait until their 17th or 18th year, before deciding to terminate their schooling short of high school graduation. There seems to be no significant variation in age between boys and girls at the time of leaving. (See table 4.)

Table 4

AGE AT TIME OF LEAVING SCHOOL

	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	137 (100%)	122 (100%)	134 (100%)	96 (100%)
15 years of age	5	8	5	8
16 years of age	58	61	47	47
17 years of age	26	25	29	30
18, or more	11	6	19	15

Slightly more than 30% of the Negro dropouts occur in the nineth grade; about 40% in the tenth grade; and about 20% in the 11th grade. Although 10% of the Negro girls do not leave until the 12th grade, virtually all of the dropouts among Negro boys occur prior to that grade.

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7. Compiled for only a sample of the schools.

8. Tooker, Ellis D., "Fact-Finding Study of Dropouts from Hartford Public Schools." Board of Education, Hartford, 1955.

9. Dillon, op. cit.

10. New England: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Middle Atlantic: New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

11. Deep South: South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Other South: Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Florida, Arkansas, and Delaware.

Birthplace

Four-fifths of the white and slightly more than half of the Negro dropouts were born in Connecticut. Considered on a regional basis, 95% of the white, and 66% of the Negro dropouts were born in the New England and Middle Atlantic States.[10] One-third of the Negro dropouts, but only 1% of the whites, were born in Southern States. The southern Negroes were about equally divided between those from the deep south and those from other Southern States.[11] Non-dropouts, both white and Negro, followed essentially the same pattern with respect to birthplace. (See table 5.)

Table 5

BIRTHPLACE

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	242	220	263	263
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Connecticut	80	56	88	56
Other New England, and Middle Atlantic States	15	10	8	8
Southern States	1	32	—	36
Deep South	1	17	—	19
Other South	—	15	—	17
Other	4	2	3	—

Length of residence in Connecticut

If we combine the respondents who were born in Connecticut with those who resided in the state for at least ten years when interviewed, we have a fairly accurate approximation of the pupils who received most or all of their schooling in Connecticut, i.e., those who were residents of the state between the age of six, when they usually enter first grade, and the age of 16, when the majority of them dropped out. Thus we find that more than nine-tenths of the white, and three-fourths of the Negro dropouts received most or all of their formal education in Connecticut integrated schools. (See table 6.) This is a factor of importance in our later analysis because it permits examination of the characteristics of a substantial group of Negro pupils who did not have the handicap of segregated schooling. Only one-fourth of the Negro dropouts and 15% of the Negro non-dropouts had resided in Connecticut for less than ten years.

Table 6

LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN CONNECTICUT

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	206	191	203	241
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Entire Lifetime	80	56	88	56
At least 10 years (but not born in Conn.)	14	20	6	29
One to 9 years	6	24	6	15

Reasons for leaving school

Three sources of information were available on reasons for leaving school: (1) the reason as given on the school record, (2) the reason given

by the dropout when interviewed, and (3) the reason given by a parent, relative, or guardian when interviewed.

The reasons, as given on the school records, are too indefinite for our purposes largely because the majority of cases are recorded as having left school because they were "16 years of age" or "went to work." (See table 7.) Either of these categories may conceal a diversity of reasons as demonstrated when the dropout themselves, or their parent, are asked to give the principal reasons for leaving.

Table 7

REASON FOR LEAVING SCHOOL, AS GIVEN ON SCHOOL RECORD

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	142 (100%)	124 (100%)	129 (100%)	96 (100%)
16 years of age	32	32	24	24
Went to work	42	49	32	40
Entered armed services	7	—	19	—
Asked to leave	8	2	13	6
Not interested	7	10	4	11
Failing	2	—	2	1
Discouraged	1	2	2	3
Poor health	—	2	1	3
Extremely low ability	1	—	1	3
Pregnancy	—	1	—	5
Other	—	2	2	3

School counselors, of course, operate at a certain disadvantage in determining the reasons because of a reluctance on the part of some dropouts to discuss their problems, or even to give any reason for their actions. For example, pregnancy was recorded as a reason for leaving for only 1% of the white girls and 5% of the Negro girls who dropped out. However, this was cited much more frequently by dropouts and their parent during the course of our interviews. Furthermore, low academic performance, though part of the school record, rarely appears as the explicit reason for termination. The extent to which inadequate academic performance is associated with leaving will be examined in a later chapter.

During the course of separate interviews with dropouts and parents, each was asked to state the principal reason for leaving. The question was open-ended, and elicited a wide variety of responses. We then grouped the answers to determine what consistency, if any, there was between the reasons given by the dropouts and those given by the parents. "Lack of interest," including a "dislike" of the school, or the teachers, or the subjects taught was cited most frequently both by the dropouts and the parents. (See tables 8 and 9.) Next, in order of frequency for both groups of respondents, were "financial" reasons, followed by "poor" academic performance. The only exception to this rank order appeared among Negro girls where "pregnancy or marriage" was cited as the leading reason in 30% of the cases. This reason, which in most cases was "pregnancy" exclusively, was cited in the same degree of frequency both by the dropouts and their parents.

Table 8

PRINCIPAL REASON GIVEN BY PUPIL FOR LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	85 (100%)	83 (100%)	77 (100%)	68 (100%)
Lack of interest, disliked school, teachers, or subjects	47	44	41	19
Financial	23	26	16	9
Poor academic performance	15	17	17	16
*Pregnancy or marriage	—	7	1	31
Asked to leave	6	3	3	4
Armed services	1	—	3	—
Other	3	2	3	6
Don't know	5	1	16	15

Table 9

PRINCIPAL REASON GIVEN BY PARENT, RELATIVE, OR GUARDIAN, FOR PUPIL LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	116 (100%)	88 (100%)	115 (100%)	75 (100%)
Lack of interest, disliked school, teachers, or subjects	39	51	34	23
Financial	22	22	18	12
Poor academic performance	17	7	9	13
Pregnancy or marriage	—	5	3	29
Asked to leave	2	—	1	—
Armed services	2	—	9	—
Other	10	6	12	7
Don't know	8	9	14	16

The "principal reason" for leaving as stated by the dropout or the parent has definite limitations for understanding the nature of our problem. In many cases a combination of circumstances may be operating in a sequence which is difficult to determine. For example, a dropout may say he left because he was "not interested," but such lack of interest may have resulted from conditions in his own personal or family background. Or a respondent may cite "low grades" as the principal reason when in fact the economic condition of his family may have required him to devote too many hours to gainful employment. An attempt to delineate and assess the relative importance of these conditioning factors will be made in subsequent chapters.

First thoughts of leaving school

The majority of the dropouts apparently did not think of leaving school too long in advance of their actually dropping out. Two-thirds of both the white and Negro dropouts said that they first thought of leaving in the grade they were in during their last year of school attendance. Most of the remaining dropouts began to think of the matter in the preceding grade.

When non-dropouts were queried as to whether they had "ever thought of leaving school," 30% of the Negro and 20% of the white boys said

that they had been giving some thought to the matter. This higher consideration by Negro boys of the possibility of leaving is, of course, reflected later in their higher dropout rate.

Parents' reactions

The majority of parents, white and Negro alike, disagreed with their sons' decision to leave school, according to the testimony of the dropouts themselves, which was corroborated by their parents. About 60% of the white parents, and 70% of the Negro parents tried to prevail upon their sons to stay, but to no avail. At least another 20% favored their sons' staying but left the decision up to them. The remainder, in most cases, felt that the decision to leave was the best possible course of action. As for the daughters, parents in both racial groups were more tolerant of their decision to drop out. Less than half of the parents in both racial groups tried to prevail upon their daughters to continue. There was a more pronounced tendency with respect to daughters than sons to allow them to make the final decision themselves.

It is worth noting that both white and Negro parents seemed to share the feeling that future opportunities for their sons, in particular, would be jeopardized if they did not acquire at least a high school education.

Parents of course have deep emotional ties with their children and our next query was designed to determine the types of persons, parents or otherwise, from whom the dropouts had sought advice prior to leaving.

Consultation with others

The decision to drop out of school, because of its bearing upon the future, should preferably be made only after seeking the best possible advice from interested and qualified persons. In this regard, the Negro dropouts seem to operate at a disadvantage in comparison with whites. When asked whether they had talked over their decision with other persons, it was apparent that Negro dropouts not only sought such advice less frequently than whites but also sought it from different types of persons than did the whites. (See table 10.)

Table 10

PERSONS WITH WHOM THE DROPOUTS DISCUSSED THE DECISION TO LEAVE SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	85 (100%)	83 (100%)	77 (100%)	68 (100%)
Mother	81	78	60	71
Father	65	60	29	22
Guardian	2	1	4	4
Relative	14	18	6	6
Friend	21	34	8	12
School teacher	14	17	5	7
School counselor	35	24	16	9
School principal	19	14	9	6
Other	1	4	1	—
None	8	10	26	21
Don't know	1	—	—	1

NOTE: Percents exceed 100 because of multiple answers.

Mothers were consulted most frequently, though to a lesser degree by Negroes than whites. Fathers were consulted by better than 60% of the white dropouts, but by only about 25% of the Negro dropouts. This lack of consultation with Negro fathers is explained in part by the higher incidence of broken homes among Negro respondents (discussed in Chapter III). But the net effect is that Negroes more frequently than whites are denied the opportunity of sharing the experience and point of view of a male parent.

The lesser frequency of parental advice from Negro parents could be compensated for by greater reliance upon other relatives, friends, or school personnel. But this did not seem to happen. White dropouts talked the matter over with other relatives or friends more than twice as frequently as did the Negro dropouts. As for school personnel, such as teachers, counselors, and principals, white dropouts seemed to avail themselves of such advice about twice as frequently as did the Negroes. Whether the lack of initiative in this respect rested with the Negro dropouts or with the school personnel cannot be determined from our data. It would seem, however, that the Negro dropout is particularly in need of counseling from that source. Furthermore, more than 20% of the Negro dropouts, compared with only 10% of the whites, said that they had never discussed their decision to leave with anyone.

Influence of friends who had left school

When the dropouts were asked whether their leaving school was influenced by their friends who had gone to work, more than 90%, both white and Negro, said that this had not affected their decision. Among those who felt it more keenly were a number of the white girls whose friends had entered full-time gainful employment.

Special problems outside of school

Eighty percent of the dropouts, white and Negro alike, felt that they had not encountered any special problem outside of school which had in any way influenced their decision to leave. Among those who felt there were such problems, the need of money, or the inability to get along with their families were most frequently mentioned. However, Negroes did not differ from whites in the degree to which these reasons were cited.

Importance of graduating from high school

Negro dropouts to a greater extent than whites seemed to be conscious of the value and importance of securing a high school diploma. More than 80% of the Negroes in comparison with slightly more than 60% of the whites felt that graduation from high school was important for all pupils. (See table 11.) About one third of the white dropouts felt that graduation was important only for some pupils. Only 3% of the Negro dropouts felt that it was of no importance.

Table 11

HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK IT IS TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL (ASKED OF DROPOUTS)?

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	85 (100%)	83 (100%)	77 (100%)	68 (100%)
Important for *all* pupils	65	62	84	91
Important for *some* pupils	33	35	10	6
Not important	1	2	3	3
Don't know	1	1	3	—

Plans to complete high school education

About two-thirds of the dropouts, with the exception of the white girls, had some plan in mind for completing their high school education at a future date. Of these, the majority were thinking of attendance at either day or night school, and some of the male dropouts in particular were thinking of acquiring it in the armed services training program. More than two-thirds of the white girls had no plans whatever for returning to school. (See table 12.)

Table 12

HAVE YOU ANY PLANS TO COMPLETE YOUR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION?

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	85 (100%)	83 (100%)	77 (100%)	68 (100%)
Yes: Day or night school	11	6	21	23
Yes: Night school	26	18	26	31
Yes: Armed services program	19	—	12	—
Yes: State technical school	5	—	4	4
Yes: Correspondence course	2	—	—	2
No Plans	36	72	32	36
Don't know	1	4	5	4

Feeling about leaving school

When asked to choose among a group of alternatives the one which best described their feelings about leaving school, about half of all the dropouts, white and Negro, said that they now wished that they had stayed, or were not quite sure that they had made the right decision by leaving. White dropouts, more than Negroes, said they were glad they left, whereas Negroes, more than whites, felt that they had no choice in the matter. Less than 20% in both racial groups said they had never given the matter much thought. (See table 13.)

Table 13

NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD TIME TO THINK IT OVER, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR FEELING ABOUT LEAVING SCHOOL?

	Dropouts	
	White	Negro
	168 (100%)	145 (100%)
I wish I had stayed; not sure I did the right thing	48	49
I am glad I left	28	7
I didn't have much choice	5	21
I never gave it much thought	15	18
Don't know	4	5

Activities since leaving school

Our compilation of activities since leaving school is based on what the dropouts or their parents reported during interviews conducted during the first six months of 1958. Since the pupils had left during the school year 1956-57 (including the summer of 1956), it would have been possible for some of the respondents to have been away from school as long as two years. In fact, about half of the respondents had been out about ten to fifteen months; another 30% more than fifteen months; and 20% less than ten months.

Certain differences between white and Negro respondents are apparent in the types of activities engaged in since leaving school. Fifty-five percent of the white boys compared with only 40% of the Negro boys were gainfully employed. Thirty percent of the Negro boys compared with only 20% of the white boys were actually unemployed at the time of the interview. Exactly the same proportion, 23%, of white and Negro boys were, or had been, in the armed services. More white than Negro boys were securing additional schooling or job training, and more Negro boys than white boys were institutionalized (usually in reform schools).[12] As for the girls, however, very nearly 70% of the whites compared with only 20% of the Negroes were gainfully employed. This difference can be explained in part though certainly not entirely by the higher marriage and pregnancy rates among the Negro girls. (See table 14.) Some of the differences between white and Negro girls, as between the boys, in the frequency of gainful employment presumably reflect greater resistance encountered by Negroes than whites in securing jobs.

Table 14

ACTIVITIES SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	108	85	101	73
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Working	55	68	40	21
Unemployed	20	18	30	14
Armed services	23	—	23	—
Helping at home	—	2	—	15
Married	1	19	4	44
Pregnant (but not married)	—	2	—	10
Additional schooling	6	7	2	8
Job training	3	1	1	1
Institution	3	1	8	1

NOTE: Percents exceed 100 because of multiple answers.

Jobs held since leaving school

A comparison of the types of jobs held by our white and Negro respondents since leaving school reveals a racial pattern of remarkable similarity to that which prevails in the general population. Even though we are concerned here with a segment of the working population that

12. Refers only to boys who were institutionalized after leaving school. Boys who were committed to reform schools while attending public school were considered to be "involuntary" dropouts and were not included in our study.

has received the minimum of formal education as required by Connecticut law, the prevailing racial difference in types of jobs seems to emerge even within the first year or two of gainful employment.

With respect to job experience, our respondents were asked to tell us about any jobs, either full or part-time, that they had held since leaving school. If they had held a number of different jobs, the highest level job paying the highest wage was selected for inclusion in our tabulation. (See table 15.)

Looking first at the experience of the boys, we find that 7% of the whites but only 1% of the Negroes were engaged in some form of apprenticeship (a prerequisite for skilled jobs). Twenty-five percent of the whites, but only 5% of the Negroes, had held clerical or sales jobs. Almost twice the proportion of Negroes had held unskilled jobs, and 20% of the Negroes compared with only 11 % of the whites had *never held any job* since leaving school.

As for the girls, 57% of the whites had held clerical or sales jobs, compared with only 4% of the Negroes. This means that white girls had secured white-collar employment 14 times as frequently as their Negro classmates who dropped out of school. It must be borne in mind that in this age group the factor of experience – so frequently cited by employers – is at a minimum for *both* whites and Negroes. In the category of unskilled jobs, Negro girls substantially exceed the whites. And 46% of the Negro girls, compared with only 6% of the whites, had *never held any job* since leaving school. This discrepancy cannot be wholly explained by the higher marriage rate among Negro girls because our question related to *any* jobs held since leaving school.

Table 15

JOBS HELD SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	87	83	76	67
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Apprenticeship	7	–	1	–
Clerical	28	57	5	4
Business, etc.	12	30	4	1
Sales	16	27	1	3
Semi-skilled	14	7	11	–
Unskilled	37	30	62	50
Building trades	7	–	4	–
Factories	11	13	29	8
Stores	14	5	12	6
Laundries	2	–	4	8
Food processing	2	5	2	–
Domestic, etc.	1	7	11	28
None	12	6	20	46
Don't know	2	–	1	–

Number of jobs

Job mobility is obviously greater among whites than Negroes. Whereas more than 70% of the Negro dropouts had held only one job, only 50% of the whites worked at only one job since leaving school. More of the

white dropouts had been able to secure two or three jobs than the Negroes. And no Negro dropout had held four or more jobs. (See table 16.)

Table 16

NUMBER OF DIFFERENT JOBS HELD SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	75 (100%)	77 (100%)	60 (100%)	36 (100%)
One job	49	51	70	75
Two jobs	23	26	15	19
Three jobs	23	16	15	6
Four or more jobs	5	7	—	—

Hourly wages

Negro males seemed to have a slight edge over white males in the amount of hourly wages they received at their jobs. (See table 17.) However, since Negro males were more frequently employed at unskilled jobs than whites, it is possible that they were working at types of jobs that held little opportunity for advancement though they were paid a higher starting wage. On the other hand, Negro girls worked at a lower rate than whites, probably because of their more frequent employment in domestic service jobs.

Table 17

HOURLY WAGE-RATES AT JOBS HELD SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	78 (100%)	78 (100%)	61 (100%)	36 (100%)
Under $1.00	5	13	8	19
$1.00 - $1.24	46	67	43	75
$1.25 - $1.49	25	19	16	3
$1.50 - $1.74	14	—	15	—
$1.75 and up	5	—	11	—
Don't know	5	1	7	3

Vocational interests

Pupils who drop out of school are forced by circumstances to accept jobs that require only a minimum of training and experience. What is more, these dropouts have vocational interests and aspirations which may go unfulfilled in a competitive environment which places more and more emphasis upon formal education. The frustrations that would be normal in this type of situation are compounded in the case of Negro dropouts because of the additional potential of racial discrimination.

The school records usually contain a notation on the vocational interest of the pupil, i.e., the type of job career that he looks forward to in the future. For the cases where such data were available, we have made comparisons between whites and Negroes, and between dropouts and non-dropouts. (See table 18.) It is also worthwhile to compare the vocational interests of the dropouts as appearing on their school records with the actual jobs they have embarked upon since leaving school. (See table 15.)

Although not more than about one-tenth of the pupils expressed any prior interest in semi-skilled or unskilled vocations, these actually were the predominant types of jobs that Negro dropouts were engaged in. Although a third of the Negro girls who left school expressed a prior interest in clerical vocations, only 4% actually were started in that direction. In sharp contrast were the white girls who left school. Fifty percent expressed a prior interest in clerical vocations, and 57% were *actually* engaged in them. Substantial proportions of dropouts, white and Negro alike, expressed an interest in the skilled trades and the professions. The prospect of entering any of the professions would be very remote for dropouts because of educational pre-requisites. As for the skilled trades, any achievement in that direction would be contingent on the opportunity for further trade school training or apprenticeship. Prospects in the apprenticeship field were very limited for Negroes judging by the findings of a previous study made by the Civil Rights Commission[13].

As for the non-dropouts – the pupils who are continuing their education – the aspirations of Negroes are very similar to those of whites. The majority of white and Negro boys are interested in the professions or the skilled trades; the majority of the white and Negro girls are interested in the professions or clerical pursuits. The extent to which these wishes will be fulfilled is contingent upon many personal and environmental factors, not the least of which is the guarantee that persons of equal ability will be offered opportunities free of discrimination because of their race.

Table 18

VOCATIONAL INTERESTS

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	60	62	55	58
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Professional	15	23	11	28
Managerial or proprietary	2	–	2	–
Clerical	2	50	2	33
Skilled	28	2	16	2
Semi-skilled	2	11	5	12
Unskilled	–	–	–	2
Armed services	23	–	22	2
Other	3	–	2	7
Uncertain, or none	25	14	40	14

	Non-Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	101	108	61	68
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Professional	40	38	36	32
Managerial or proprietary	3	–	3	–
Clerical	4	45	5	44
Skilled	15	2	15	–
Semi-skilled	–	4	–	10
Unskilled	–	1	–	1
Armed services	12	3	22	3
Other	–	–	2	–
Uncertain, or none	27	7	17	10

13. Stetler, Henry G., Training of Negroes in the Skilled Trades, Hartford, Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights, 1954.

III. FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

In this and succeeding chapters the characteristics of the dropouts will be presented in comparison with similar attributes of a sample of white and Negro pupils who remained in school. A more complete understanding of the dropout population should emerge as the result of this contrasting picture.

The family situation

Studies of dropouts made elsewhere have stressed the greater frequency of broken homes in the background of pupils who leave school than among those who remain. In the present study, white pupils who remained in school demonstrated the greatest degree of family stability in that more than 80% were living with their father *and* mother at the time our interviews were conducted (See table 19.) Though in some cases the respondent may have reported a step-parent as the real parent, the family would include two parents, in contrast with the situation wherein the parents were separated or divorced and the respondent was living with one parent only (usually the mother). This latter type was found more frequently in families of white dropouts than among whites who remained in school.

Negro families, whether those of dropouts or non-dropouts, showed a greater incidence of instability than was found among white families; there were more separations, more divorces, and more foster parents. These broken homes probably had their most pronounced effect upon the Negro girls who resorted to early marriage much more frequently than girls from white families. Significantly, the type of family situation, however, did not differ markedly between Negro boys who dropped out of school and those who remained.

Table 19

THE FAMILY SITUATION

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	85	83	77	67
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Living with father and mother	69	55	43	22
Living with father or mother—parents separated, divorced, or one deceased	22	22	38	33
Living with other relatives, or foster parents	4	5	13	9
Married	5	18	6	36
Living in own home	5	14	5	20
Living with parents	—	4	1	16
	Non-Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	95	102	117	108
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Living with father and mother	88	84	50	64
Living with father or mother—parents separated, divorced, or one deceased	11	16	42	24
Living with other relatives or foster parents	1	—	8	10
Married: Living in own home	—	—	—	2

Family mobility

In reply to the query as to whether their families had changed residence since the respondent entered first grade, more than 30% of the whites compared with 20% of the Negroes reported that they had not moved since entering first grade. Curiously enough, within each racial group there was virtually no difference between dropouts and non-dropouts in regard to families who had not changed residence. However, more Negro families than white had made one or two moves, while the difference between the races tended to be minimized among those families who had moved three or more times. (See table 20.) On the whole, while Negro families showed greater mobility than whites, the families of Negro dropouts did not differ markedly from Negro non-dropouts in this regard – and this, too, is significant in our search for the real reasons.

Table 20

CHANGES IN RESIDENCE OF FAMILY SINCE RESPONDENT ENTERED FIRST GRADE

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	204	187	202	238
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
No change	32	20	35	20
One or two moves	38	52	49	57
Three or more moves	29	28	16	23

Siblings living at home

Among the dropouts, 51% of the Negroes and 37% of the whites had three or more brothers or sisters living at home. Among the non-dropouts, the number was considerably reduced with 37% of the Negroes and only 19% of the whites reporting three or more living at home. (See table 21.) Larger families, of course, would place greater pressure on the family's economic resources, a pressure more intense among Negroes because of their lower economic status. Only about 20% of the respondents in all groups said that they had no brother or sisters living at home. And as would be expected, there was a greater tendency for brothers or sisters of dropouts than non-dropouts to have left school. This was true in both racial groups.

Table 21

SIBLINGS LIVING AT HOME

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	241	217	249	276
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
None	21	24	23	20
One or two	42	35	58	43
Three or more	37	51	19	37

Education of parents

Parents were asked to tell us the extent of their formal education, i.e., whether they had attended grade school only, or had attended or graduated from high school or business school, or had attended or graduated

from college or professional school. Such data were then grouped into categories depicting the highest level of education acquired by *either* parent. In this regard, we are primarily interested in ascertaining the maximum educational background that either parent can offer as a basis for advising and counseling their children. Thus if one parent had a high school diploma and the other a college degree, the child presumably would have the benefit, in his home environment, of the experience and advice of at least one college trained person.

Among Negro dropouts, in a larger percent of the cases at least one parent had acquired more formal education than either parent of the white dropouts, i.e., larger proportions had attended high school, or graduated from high school or college. (See table 22.) On the other hand, among non-droppers the position was reversed with at least one white parent having more education than either of the Negro parents. Worth noting is the fact that differences in educational advancement are more pronounced between the parents of dropouts and non-dropouts in the white group than between parents of dropouts and non-dropouts in the Negro group. This tendency toward greater homogeneity within the Negro group seems to recur in other phases of our study.

Table 22

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF FATHER OR MOTHER

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	201	173	201	228
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Grades 1-8 only	44	27	31	28
Attended high school,or graduated from business school	34	42	21	36
Graduated from high school, or attended or graduated from college or professional school	22	31	48	36

Gainful occupation of parents

The principal wage-earner in the Negro families – whether of dropouts or non-dropouts – was engaged most frequently in a semi-skilled or unskilled job. In fact there was scarcely any significant difference between the range of jobs held by parents of Negro dropouts or non-dropouts. (See table 23.) However, among white parents ,there was not only a greater concentration in the skilled and white-collar jobs than among Negroes, but there were noticeable differences between jobs held by parents of non-dropouts and dropouts. Parents of children who remained in school were more frequently engaged in proprietary or managerial pursuits and less frequently in semi-skilled occupations than the parents of dropouts.

The contrast between white and Negro parents of non-dropouts is of course most obvious, with white parents more frequently holding jobs requiring greater degrees of skill. This, despite the fact that 4% of white and Negro parents alike were engaged in the professions.

The type of gainful occupation pursued by the principal wage-earner is, in general, a reasonably accurate index of the economic status of the family. In terms of prestige it also reflects the social status of the family

in the community, though group evaluations of the degree of prestige attached to various levels of jobs may differ somewhat between the white and Negro communities. Our data, of course, tend to confirm the disadvantaged position of the Negro group with respect to the levels and prestige of the types of occupations engaged in.

Table 23

PRINCIPAL GAINFUL OCCUPATION IN FAMILY

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	225	166	246	223
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Professional	2	1	4	4
Proprietary or Managerial	6	1	22	1
Clerical	16	7	18	10
Skilled	32	11	30	13
Semi-skilled	32	36	15	36
Unskilled	12	44	11	36

Family income

Data on total income of all the participating members of a family would provide at least a partial index of the family's economic resources. However, accurate data on income are difficult to secure even through the medium of direct interviews with parents. There is more outright refusal to answer this type of question than almost any other. If this is overcome, respondents try to avoid being too specific. And even if they are specific, there is always some doubt about the inclusiveness of the estimate. There is an understandable reluctance to impart information on one's private financial affairs to a total stranger.

However, we did secure answers from a substantial proportion of our respondents, and we present the findings for what they are worth. Grouping the data into three broad categories of family income, i.e., under $60, $60-99, and $100 or more, facilitates comparisons on the basis of more inclusive levels and eliminates some distortion that might result if we attempted to make comparisons on the basis of very small, specific income groups. (See table 24.)

Table 24

WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	137	107	100	112
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Under $60 weekly	23	39	6	24
Gainful employment	14	22	3	13
State aid or Social Security	9	17	3	11
$60-99 weekly	36	38	42	43
$100 or more weekly	41	23	52	33

It would have been unusual to find that Negro families had higher incomes than whites. For example, even among families of non-dropouts, 24% of the Negroes but only 6% of the whites had weekly incomes of less than $60. and one-third of the Negroes compared with more than 50% of the whites had incomes of more than $100 weekly. However, we

must again emphasize that while these income data may reflect the economicnomic status of the Negro population of Connecticut because of the nature of our sample, they probably underestimate the incomes of families in the white population. As pointed out in Chapter 1 none of our white respondents were drawn from schools located in the wealthier surburban communities, which incidentally contain very few Negro families.

There also seems to be a positive relationship between family income and the ability of children to remain in school. In both racial groups family income was higher in families of non-dropouts than in families of those who left school.

The value of education in commanding higher incomes is forcibly demonstrated if we examine the relationship between family income and the maximum level of education acquired by the parents. (See table 25.) Whether white or Negro, the lower incomes (under $60 weekly) tend to decrease as the level of education increases, and the higher incomes ($100 or more weekly) tend to increase as the level of education increases. However, the lag of Negro families behind white families in absolute terms is clearly illustrated by the fact that the income distribution of white families in the grade 1-8 level of education is almost exactly equal to the income distribution of Negro families on the high school or college graduate level. In other words, while education is of positive value to both racial groups in the way of higher incomes, it still does not pay off equally for equal educational achievement. This finding lends credence to the contention of Negro leaders that the Negro often needs to be better qualified than a white person in a specific situation in order to compete effectiveiy.

Table 25

WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME, BY HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF PARENTS

	Grades 1-8 only		Attended high school, or graduated from business school		H.S. graduate or attended or graduated from college or professional school	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
	94	60	64	86	76	69
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Under $60 weekly	19	44	15	32	10	17
Gainful employment	12	22	11	20	5	12
State aid or Social Security	7	22	4	12	5	5
$60-99 weekly	45	37	44	40	29	46
$100 or more weekly	36	19	41	28	61	37

IV. THE SCHOOL: ATTITUDES, ACTIVITIES, AND ADJUSTMENT

Our focus of interest in the present and following chapter will be on activities *within* the school, turning our attention first to problems of adjustment and then concentrating on academic interests and achievements.

Attitudes toward subject-matter

In general, the pupils who left school were more dissatisfied with the subjects they studied than were those who remained. (See table 26.) However, Negro pupils, whether dropouts or non-dropouts, expressed greater satisfaction with subject-matter than did the white pupils, i.e., larger proportions said that they "liked all of the subjects" they were taught, and smaller proportions "liked only a few" of the subjects.

About one-fourth of the pupils in all groups felt that there were some subjects that they should have been learning which were not taught in school. There was no clearly discernible trend in their feelings on this matter, although dropouts did tend to make more frequent reference to industrial arts subjects, and non-dropouts more frequently were of the opinion that more language courses should be introduced.

Table 26

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SUBJECTS YOU STUDIED THE PAST YEAR IN SCHOOL?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Liked all of them	23	35	36	45
Liked most of them	45	44	50	45
Liked a few of them	25	19	13	9
Didn't like any of them	5	2	1	1
Don't know	2	—	—	—

Attitudes toward teachers

Differences in the evaluation of relationships with teachers were more clear-cut between dropouts and non-dropouts than were their feelings concerning subject-matter. Less than 40% of the dropouts, whether white or Negro, felt that they got along well with *all* of their teachers, with the remainder about equally divided between those who "got along well with most" or who "got along with all but one" of them. (See table 27.) About 6% of the dropouts felt that they "couldn't get along with

Table 27

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR TEACHERS?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Got along well with all of them	36	38	58	68
Got along well with most of them	30	31	22	16
Got along well with all but one of them	26	24	17	16
Couldn't get along with most of them	7	6	3	—
Couldn't get along with any of them	1	1	—	—

most of their teachers." On the other hand, among the non-dropouts, about 60% of the whites and about 70% of the Negroes felt that they got along well with *all* of their teachers. From this it seems that the majority of white and Negro pupils are in agreement that they have good relationships with their teachers – in the context of a racially integrated school system. This was borne out in the replies to a related question as to "how many of your teachers really seemed to care about you as a person?" Although the replies differed somewhat between dropouts and non-dropouts, whites and Negroes were in substantial agreement within each of these groups. In both races, more than 60% of the non-dropouts felt that most of their teachers "took an interest in them as persons." (See table 28.)

Table 28

HOW MANY OF YOUR TEACHERS REALLY SEEMED TO CARE ABOUT YOU AS A PERSON?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Most of them	48	52	61	61
A few of them	20	21	22	22
One teacher	20	16	8	6
None of them	5	7	6	8
Don't know	7	4	3	3

Attitudes toward classmates

Generally, more than 80% of the pupils felt that they got along well with their classmates, though white dropouts were a little less positive in this respect than the Negro dropouts. However, among the non-dropouts, the Negro pupils were a little less sure than the whites that they got along well with all their classmates. For example, 16% of the Negro non-dropouts compared with 10% of the whites felt that they got along well with only *some* of their classmates. (See table 29.) It is noteworthy that none of the white or Negro pupils remaining in school felt that they *couldn't* get along with most or any of their classmates.

Table 29

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF YOUR CLASSMATES?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Got along well with all of them	77	85	90	84
Got along well with some of them	19	12	10	16
Couldn't get along well with most of them	3	2	–	–
Couldn't get along well with any of them	1	1	–	–

What the pupils liked best, or least, about school

The respondents were asked to state (1) what they liked *best,* and (2) what they liked *least* about going to school. These questions were open-ended and designed to elicit an over-all evaluation of the phase of

school life which pleased or displeased them most. They differed from the previous questions in that the former were designed to measure on a pre-determined scale the respondents' attitudes in specific areas such as subject-matter, teachers, or classmates.

The non-dropouts seemed to feel that "meeting new people," "some of their subjects," "getting an education," and "extra-curricular activities" were the things they liked best about going to school. Among the dropouts, "some of their subjects," "meeting new people," "extra- curricular activities," and "gym class," were given priority among the things they liked best. (See table 30.)

Table 30

WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Some of my subjects	42	32	26	19
Getting an education	2	3	19	18
Meeting new people	28	15	51	29
Extra-curricular activities	10	6	17	12
Gym class	6	14	4	6
Teachers, principal	4	4	4	2
Lunch, dismissal time	4	3	2	2
Everything	4	12	4	9
Nothing	5	6	—	1
Don't know	14	16	12	14

NOTE: Percents exceed 100 because of multiple answers.

Dropouts seemed to feel that the "teachers," or "one subject," or the "routine," or "some of the kids" were the things they liked least, though these were also mentioned less frequently by the non-dropouts. (See table 31.) On the whole, non-dropouts were less inclined to pinpoint the thing they like least about school.

Table 31

WHAT DID YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT GOING TO SCHOOL?

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	168	145	197	225
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Teachers, principal	24	28	16	18
One subject	14	10	6	9
Too much homework	7	2	15	4
Some of the kids	8	2	2	7
Routine	8	7	2	4
Gym class	2	5	2	1
Facilities	3	3	11	4
Staying after school	1	2	—	2
Other	4	2	2	6
No particular dislike	21	26	41	36
Don't know	11	18	8	12

Note: Percents may exceed 100 because of multiple answers.

Extra-curricular activities

The respondents' involvement in extra-curricular activites was measured according to whether they said they had participated in "many," a "few," or "no" activities. Without enumerating specific activities, we sought to determine in broad general terms whether there were any noticeable differences in the degree of participation by the various groups. Since some respondents had dropped out of school later than others, or were now attending higher grades than others, their replies have been grouped into two categories: grades 8-9, and grades 10-12.

The dropouts, whether white or Negro, tended to participate in such activities to a lesser degree than non-dropouts. White dropouts tended to participate in fewer activities than Negro dropouts even in the senior high school grades (10-12). For example, about 60% of the white dropouts had no extra-curricular activities, compared with 50% of the Negroes in these grades. Among the non-dropouts, Negroes tended to have a slightly higher degree of participation than whites in the senior high school grades. (See table 32.)

The lesser extra-curricular activity of dropouts, apart from the need in some cases to devote time and energy to outside jobs, probably reflects a greater lack of interest in school activities in general. Larger proportions of the poorer students of both races are included among the dropouts, and educators have long been familiar with the fact that it is the better students who seem to be able to find more time to devote to extra-curricular activities. Lack of interest in such activities seems to go hand in hand with lack of interest in academic work.

Table 32

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

	Dropouts Left school in:				Non-Dropouts Attending:			
	Grades 8-9		Grades 10-12		Grades 8-9		Grades 10-12	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
Degree of participation:	58 (100%)	50 (100%)	106 (100%)	92 (100%)	90 (100%)	85 (100%)	107 (100%)	131 (100%)
Many activities	3	14	7	9	12	13	16	23
Few activities	33	40	35	43	57	36	56	52
No activities	64	46	58	48	31	51	28	25

Absenteeism

Absenteeism was measured by the "number of days absent from school during the last complete year," as noted on the school record of each respondent. Absenteeism was greater among dropouts than non-dropouts, and greater among Negroes than whites. Among the dropouts, 26% of the whites and 14% of the Negroes had been absent fewer than six days, whereas 19% of the whites and 25% of the Negroes had been absent 40 or more days. Among the non-dropouts, 44% of the whites and 34% of the Negroes were absent fewer than six days, whereas only 2% of the whites and 4% of the Negroes had been absent 40 or more days. (See table 33.)

Table 33

DAYS ABSENT FROM SCHOOL DURING LAST COMPLETE YEAR

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	208	183	250	271
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
0-5 days	26	14	44	34
6-14 days	20	25	32	35
15-24 days	16	23	17	15
25-39 days	19	13	5	12
40 or more days	19	25	2	4

Physical defects

Our data on physical defects cover such conditions which were noted on the respondents' school records. Apparently these notations covered chronic or recurring conditions that came to the attention of the school counselors and obviously did not include the usual run of minor injuries, colds, etc. which would occur more frequently.

On the whole, non-dropouts seemed to have fewer physical defects than dropouts, and whites had fewer defects than Negroes though the percentage differences were fairly small. (See table 34.) Negroes seemed to have a slightly higher incidence of "eye trouble," "heart condition," or "tuberculosis or upper respiratory infection," than did whites, though again the differences between the races were not large. Our data in this regard are of scant statistical significance, though they are suggestive of an area that may need further exploration.

Table 34

PHYSICAL DEFECTS

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	164	160	187	175
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Speech ailment	—	2	1	1
Eye trouble	3	4	1	6
Diabetes	1	1	—	—
Dental care	2	3	—	—
Tuberculosis or upper respiratory infection	—	3	1	—
Nose and throat	2	1	—	—
Heart condition	2	4	1	4
Hearing	3	1	—	2
Asthma or Hay Fever	1	1	2	2
Other	3	4	3	3
None	83	76	91	82

Discipline problems

Whether the pupil had been involved in a disciplinary problem of one type or another was noted on his permanent school record. Problems of this type occurred more frequently among the dropouts than the non-dropouts. "Disregrad for regulations" and "frequent insolence or defiance" were noted more often for whites and Negroes alike. Although disciplinary problems of an "unspecified" nature were higher for Negro than white dropouts, the over-all differences on the basis of race were

relatively small. Disciplinary problems were an infrequent occurrence among both the white and Negro pupils who remained in school. (See table 35.)

Table 35
TYPES OF DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	173	165	198	177
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Disregard for regulations	14	16	1	3
Disrupting classes	2	2	1	—
Insolent or defiant on numerous occasions	5	5	1	1
Previously suspended	3	5	—	—
Referred to juvenile court	2	—	1	—
Asked to leave school	1	3	—	—
Fighting, use of knives, etc.	1	1	—	—
Other (unspecified)	11	17	—	1
None	66	56	94	93

Note: Percents may exceed 100 because of multiple entries.

School adjustment

The permanent record included an over-all evaluation by the counselor of the pupil's adjustment to school. We have grouped these evaluations on a six-point scale ranging from those who were rated as "outstanding" or the best adjusted, to those who were rated as "poor" or the least well adjusted.

As could be anticipated, the pupils who remained in school were on the whole much better adjusted then those who dropped out. Only 5% of the dropouts, white or Negro, were rated as "outstanding" or "good", whereas more than 50% received the lowest ratings of "fair to poor" or "poor." However, among the non-dropouts, about 20% received the two highest ratings of "outstanding" or "good", and only 20% were rated in the two lowest brackets. (See table 36.)

Table 36
SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	229	192	246	219
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Outstanding	1	2	7	6
Good	5	3	16	12
Good to fair	12	17	23	25
Fair	28	25	35	41
Fair to poor	36	36	16	14
Poor	18	17	3	2

More significant, however, is the fact that Negro pupils received ratings which were virtually identical – point by point on our scale – with their white classmates. Whether they remained in school or dropped out, Negro pupils seemed to be neither better nor poorer adjusted to their school environment than the white pupils. This finding seems quite significant when we consider that (1) these ratings represent a composite set of evaluations made by counsellors in 12 schools in four cities, and (2) the less favorable economic, familial, and socio-psychological factors in the Negroes' background could account for tensions that might have resulted in poorer adjustment in comparison with the whites.

V. ACADEMIC INTERESTS AND ACHIEVEMENT

The type of curriculum pursued by our respondents, together with measures of ability and performance, merit careful examination because future careers are often contingent on the groundwork that has been laid in the earlier years of academic concentration. For example, for those pupils having professional aspirations, the specialized content of the college preparatory curriculum may well serve as a stimulus to their interests, and their performance may give some indication of their ability to meet certain basic academic prerequisites for professional careers.

The principal courses or curricula in which most of our respondents were enrolled were the college preparatory, general, industrial arts, or commercial.

Among the dropouts, boys tended to be concentrated in the general or industrial arts courses, and the girls in general or commercial courses. (See table 37.) Relatively few of the dropouts of either race were pursuing the college preparatory curriculum. Negro dropouts to an even greater extent than whites were clustered in the general course – a type of curriculum which has been described as "less selective, with aims and aspirations less clearly defined."[14]

Among the pupils who remained in school, the gap between the races is more sharply defined. White students were enrolled about three times as frequently as Negroes in the college preparatory curriculum. On the other hand, Negro students were enrolled about twice as frequently as whites in the general or industrial arts curricula. (See table 37.) Girls of both races were enrolled in the same proportion in the commercial course.

Table 37

COURSES TAKEN IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

	Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	111	102	98	73
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
College preparatory	5	4	2	1
General	41	38	55	49
Industrial Arts	48	1	34	–
Commercial	5	47	3	40
Home Economics	–	4	–	3
Other	1	6	6	7
	Non-Dropouts			
	White		Negro	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	135	129	99	103
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
College preparatory	46	32	14	12
General	26	18	43	38
Industrial Arts	14	–	29	1
Commercial	7	44	9	39
Home Economics	–	1	–	3
Other	7	5	5	7

14. Tooker, Ellis D., op. cit., p. 8.

Noteworthy of comparison are the courses in which the non-dropouts were enrolled (table 37) and the vocational interests of the non-dropouts as noted earlier in Chapter II (table 18). Among white pupils, there seems to be a very close relationship between enrollment in the college preparatory course and vocational interest in the professions. About 40% of the whites indicated such an interest, and almost the same proportion were taking college preparatory work. On the other hand, although better than 30% of the Negro pupils showed an interest in professional careers, only a little more than 10% were taking college preparatory courses. Negro non-dropouts were taking the general course about three times as frequently as the college preparatory course. Although the preparation received in the general course could lead to college admission in many instances, an earlier orientation to the subject-matter of the college preparatory curruculum would seem to offer a greater advantage to those interested in professional careers. And, of course, we are not unmindful of the fact that certain professional or semi-professional careers are open to high school graduates who have undertaken some additional technical training.

As for the clerical vocations, just about the same proportion of white and Negro girls who had expressed an interest in pursuing clerical careers were enrolled in the commercial course. However, in the light of the experience of dropouts in securing clerical jobs (table 15, chapter II), and on the basis of past experience of the Connecticut Civil Rights Commission in handling Fair Employment Practices complaints, Negro girls may encounter greater resistance than whites in entering this type of vocation. During the first ten years of the Connecticut commission's administration of the FEP law, 28% of the complaints processed involved clerical and sales jobs. However, the commission has positive knowledge that during this same ten year period, many commercial and industrial establishments in the state have opened up new opportunities for Negro workers on their clerical staffs.

Subjects failed

During their last complete year of school attendance only about one-fourth of the dropouts had passed all of their subjects. About 40% of the whites had failed one or two subjects, and another 30% had failed three or more. Among the Negroes, 35% failed one or two subjects, whereas 40% had failed three or more. (See table 38.)

Table 38

SUBJECTS FAILED IN LAST COMPLETE YEAR OF SCHOOL

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	199	189	230	256
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
One or two subjects	41	35	17	34
Three or more subjects	31	40	2	7
None	28	25	81	59

Grades repeated

About 50% of the dropouts had had to repeat at least one grade in the junior or senior high school before leaving. This was exclusive of any additional retardation that might have occurred in the elementary grades of which we had no adequate record for most of our respondents. Also, among the dropouts, the rate of Negro retardation as measured by grade repetition was slightly higher than that of whites.

A relatively small proportion of non-dropouts had repeated entire grades, though the rate was substantially higher for Negroes (14%) than for whites (4%). (See table 39.)

Table 39

GRADES REPEATED IN JUNIOR OR SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	158	132	243	241
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
One grade	47	50	4	14
Two grades	4	8	—	—
Three grades	1	2	—	—
None	48	40	96	86

Intelligence test scores

Intelligence test scores in the form of intelligence quotients[15] were available from the school records of most of our respondents. Tests administered on a group rather than an individual basis were most frequently used, although the type of group test varied among the school systems of the various cities. About 55% of the scores we utilized were derived from the Otis-Beta Mental Ability test; about 20% from the California Mental Maturity test; and about 15% from the Science Research Associates – Primary Mental Ability test. In all, about 90% of the scores were derived from group tests. The remaining 10% were based on individual tests scattered among the Stanford-Binet, Wechsler-Bellevue, and Henmon-Nelson types. (See table 40.) Whenever a school record contained a number of test results that had been administered at different times, we selected the one of most recent date. On this basis, about 80% of the scores of dropouts and more than 90% of the scores of non-dropouts were based on tests administered between July 1953 and June 1957.

Table 40

TYPE OF INTELLIGENCE TEST ADMINISTERED

	White	Negro
	438	433
	(100%)	(100%)
Otis	56	57
California	23	19
SRA-PMA	13	14
Stanford-Binet	2	3
Wechsler-Bellevue	1	2
Henmon-Nelson	2	2
Other	3	3

15. The I.Q. is derived by dividing the mental age by the chronological age of the pupil.

The inclusion, in a distribution, of intelligence quotients that were derived from different types of tests does not represent the most desirable form of research procedure. Although a quotient of 100 is supposed to represent the average for all persons in such tests, with about half of the cases falling below and half above the average, the tests do tend to vary in their deviation from the average. Some tests tend to yield a higher percentage of cases at the extremes of the distribution, i.e., more cases on the higher or lower I.Q. levels. However, the best available data we had access to for the year 1956-57 were from school systems using different tests. As long as due caution is exercised in their interpretation, the use of the composite distribution seems justified for the following reasons: (1) the different types of tests were just about equally represented in both the white and Negro distributions (see table 40) and (2) the mean average I.Q. for all cases (based on different tests) was virtually the same as the mean average I.Q. for Otis tests only, the latter having been utilized in 55% of the cases (see table 41).

Table 41

INTELLIGENCE TEST SCORES (I.Q.'s)

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White (A)	Negro (B)	White (C)	Negro (D)
	213 (100%)	182 (100%)	235 (100%)	262 (100%)
Under 70	4	10	—	1
70-89	36	60	11	40
90-109	49	27	63	49
90-99	31	21	28	29
100-109	18	6	35	20
110-129	11	3	26	10
130 or higher	—	—	*	—
Mean I.Q. (all cases)	93.2	84	103.5	93.3
Mean I.Q. — Otis only (55% of cases)	93.7	84.4	104.7	93.8

*Less than 1/2 of one percent (one case only)

As measured by the intelligence tests the pupils who dropped out of school were of lower mental ability, on the average, than those who remained. The tests showed a difference of about ten points in average intelligence between white dropouts (93.2) and non-dropouts (103.5), and a similar difference between Negro dropouts (84) and non-dropouts (93.4). (See table 41.) Regardless *of the various reasons for leaving school dis*cussed earlier, the comparative distributions of intelligence quotients indicate that the schools retain the better pupils within both the white (see figure 1) and Negro (see figure 2) groups.

White dropouts had a higher average I.Q. than Negro dropouts; a difference of about nine points between the white (93.2) and Negro (84) groups (See figure 3.) An average difference of ten points also separated white non-dropouts (103.5) from Negro non-dropouts (93.3). (See figure 4.) It is important to recognize that the *range* of mental ability, as measured by these tests, is quite similar for both racial groups, i.e., low, medium, and high scoring individuals are found both among white and Negro pupils, though the over-all average tends to be lower in the latter group. Thus a measurable difference does exist between the white and Negro pupils with respect to their performance on these tests.

FIG. 1

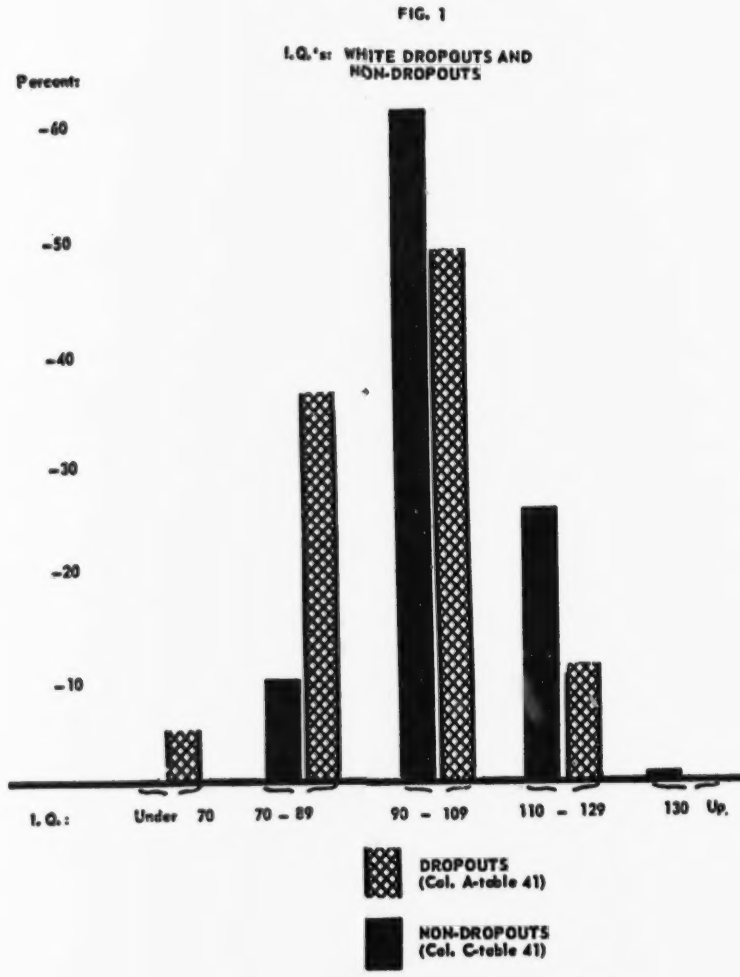
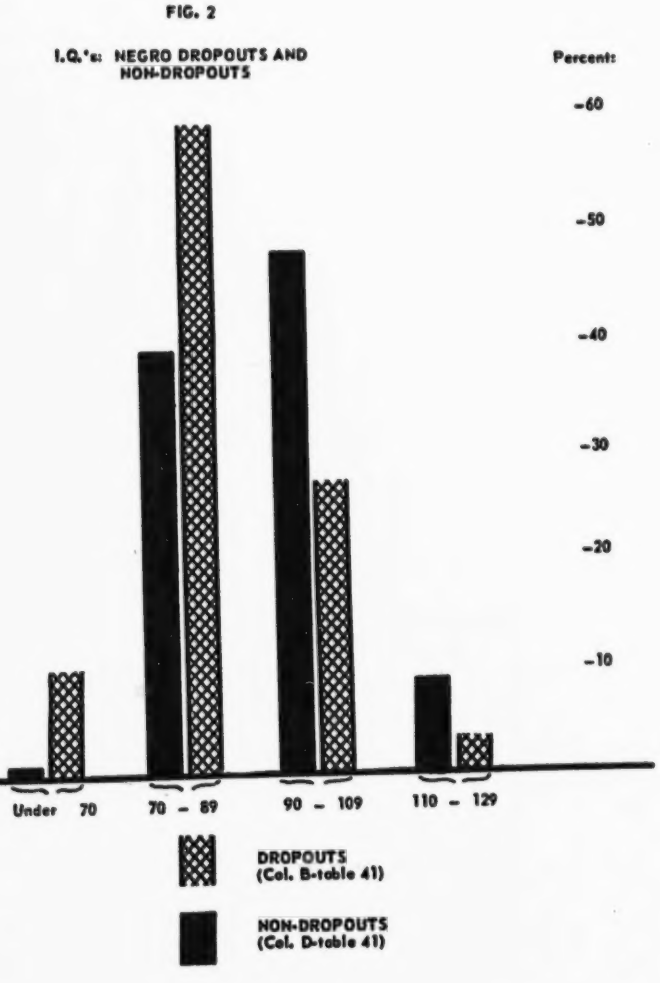

I.Q.'s: WHITE DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUTS
Percent:
60
50
40
30
20
10
I. Q.:
Under 70
70 – 89
90 – 109
110 – 129
130 Up.
DROPOUTS (Col. A-table 41)
NON-DROPOUTS (Col. C-table 41)

FIG. 2


I.Q.'s: NEGRO DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUTS
Percent:
60
50
40
30
20
10
Under 70
70 – 89
90 – 109
110 – 129
DROPOUTS (Col. B-table 41)
NON-DROPOUTS (Col. D-table 41)

Intelligence tests are essentially devices for measuring the ability to learn. They have been developed by psychologists and educators during the past 50 years as a quantitative device that could serve as a basis for predicting the potential level of mental achievemnet. Psychological and social scientists are pretty much in agreement that such tests are not a measure of innate mental ability, based on inherited or genetic factors exclusively, but rather are a product of any such factors in combination with environmental or cultural factors as reflected in the individual's performance on the test. Whether there are any innate or genetic differences in intelligence between ethnic or racial groups is something that researchers have never proven, chiefly because of the difficulties involved in devising tests that isolate genetic from environmental or cultural factors[16].

Our finding that average performance on intelligence tests is lower among Negroes than whites is not unusual, and is corroborated by studies made elsewhere[17]. However, many authorities are of the opinion that the difference between the races in their respective performance can be explained, in large part, by cultural differences between the groups[18]. The present study affords an opportunity to examine the relationship between some of these cultural factors and performance on the tests, to which we now turn our attention. For the purpose of clarity, we shall present only the average I.Q. associated with specific cultural factors, instead of the total I.Q. distribution for each factor[19]. (See table 42.)

Birthplace, residence and I.Q.

Unlike the white respondents, a substantial proportion of our Negro respondents were born in southern states, thus permitting a comparison of Negro pupils in this respect. The fact of being born in the south rather than in Connecticut seemed to have relatively little influence. The average I.Q. for Negroes born in the south was 87.9 compared with 90.8 for those born in Connecticut. However, a related factor — the length of time the Negro respondents resided in Connecticut — seemed to have a greater effect. Negroes who had resided less than ten years in the state had an average of 84, compared with an average of 91 for those who had resided in the state ten or more years.

This difference seems to be of some significance when we realize that the Negroes who had lived in Connecticut more than ten years had received virtually all of their public education in integrated schools, whereas those who had lived in the state less than ten years had in most instances started their public schooling in a segregated system in the southern states. The adverse psychological effect of attendance at inferior segregated schools has frequently been cited in recent years as a factor inhibiting the performance of Negro pupils. (See table 42.)

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16. For a succinct discussion of the status of research on this subject, see *Intelligence of the American Negro,* a Research Report, Vol. 3, No. 2, published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B"rith, New York, Nov. 1956.

17. Ibid, p.4. "Literally hundreds of smaller research studies have corroborated the Army findings (World Wars I and II) that American Negroes, on the average, score lower on intelligence tests than whites."

18. Ibid, p.6. For example, Klineberg, Garth, Garrett, Myrdal, et al.

19. Tables showing the complete I.Q. distributions are available for examination at the offices of the Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights, State Office Building, Hartford, Conn.

FIG. 3

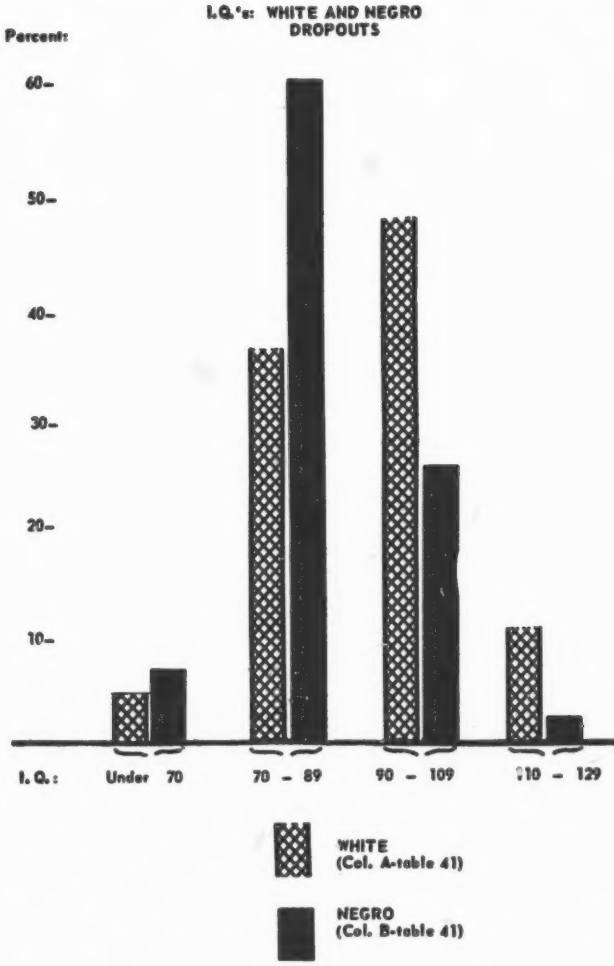
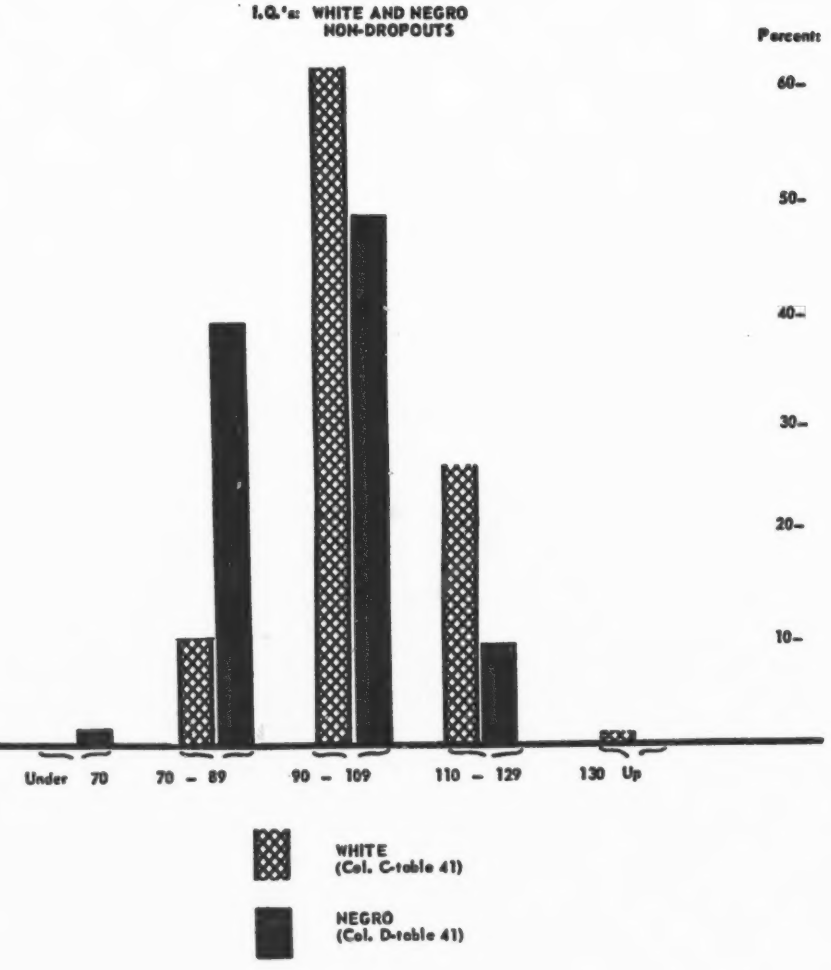

I.Q.'s: WHITE AND NEGRO DROPOUTS
Percent:
60–
50–
40–
30–
20–
10–
I. Q.:
Under 70
70 – 89
90 – 109
110 – 129
WHITE (Col. A-table 41)
NEGRO (Col. B-table 41)

Fig. 4


I.Q.'s: WHITE AND NEGRO NON-DROPOUTS
Percent:
60–
50–
40–
30–
20–
10–
Under 70
70 – 89
90 – 109
110 – 129
130 Up
WHITE (Col. C-table 41)
NEGRO (Col. D-table 41)

Family background and I.Q.

If we divide our respondents into two groups: (1) those who were living with both parents, and (2) those who were living with only one parent or other relatives, we find that the average I.Q. differed for both whites and Negroes. Negro respondents who were living in broken homes had an average I.Q. of 86.6, about six points lower than the average of those who were living with both parents (92.5). White respondents differed by about four points. When we realize that a much larger proportion of Negro than white pupils came from broken homes, it seems clear that achievement of greater stability in the Negroes' family background would tend to increase the average performance of Negro pupils. (See table 42.)

Table 42

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED CULTURAL FACTORS AND MEAN AVERAGE I.Q.

	Number of Cases	Mean Average I.Q.
All Cases		
White	447	98.6
Negro	444	89.5
Birthplace		
Negroes born in Connecticut	235	90.8
Negroes born in South	139	87.9
Residence		
Negroes who resided 10 or more years in Connecticut	316	90.9
Negroes who resided less than 10 years in Connecticut	58	84.
Family Background		
Living with both parents		
White	224	99.6
Negro	161	92.5
Living with one parent, or other relatives		
White	63	95.3
Negro	136	86.6
Maximum education in family		
Grades 1-8:		
White	125	94.5
Negro	92	89.9
High school attended:		
White	93	95.5
Negro	142	88.4
High school or college graduate:		
White	115	104.1
Negro	119	92.6
Principal occupation in family		
White Collar:		
White	139	103.9
Negro	46	91.9
Non-white collar:		
White	256	96.5
Negro	298	90.
Family Income		
$100 or more weekly:		
White	91	99.2
Negro	52	90.3
Under $100 weekly:		
White	103	94.6
Negro	139	88.6

Maximum education in family and I.Q.

The performance of white pupils on intelligence tests seems to be more sensitive than that of Negro pupils to the maximum level of education achieved by an adult member of the family. Among whites there is an increase in average I.Q. from 94.5 for those who had a parent with only a grammar school education to an average of 104.1 for those having a parent who graduated from high school or college. Negro respondents also registered an increase, though only from 89.9 to 92.6 (See table 42.)

Principal occupation in family and I.Q.

White pupils coming from families in which the principal wage-earner has a white-collar job tend to have a higher average I.Q. (103.9) than those having a parent working at a non-white collar job (96.5). Among Negroes, the difference in average I.Q. is much smaller, 91.9 as compared with 90. (See table 42.)

Family income and I.Q.

Although, as indicated earlier, data on total family income were difficult to secure and probably not too reliable, the average I-Q. of white pupils seems to be more sensitive to an increase in total family income than that of Negro pupils. White respondents whose families had an income of less than $100 weekly had an average I.Q. of 94.6 compared with 99.2 for those whose families had more than $100 weekly. In the case of Negro pupils, increase in average I.Q. was from 88.6 to 90.3 — not enough to be statistically significant. (See table 42.)

Factors such as family stability, attendance at integrated schools, educational attainment of the parents, and economic security are important in the sense that they may create an atmosphere of encouragement, stimulation, and motivation for the pupil in his educational pursuits.

Academic achievement

The school records yielded cumulative averages of the pupils' achievement in the subjects studied. Since the passing grade varied from 50 to 70 among the various school systems, it was necessary to convert the numerical averages into letter averages on a scale of A,B,C,D, and F for the purpose of insuring comparability. The great majority of the dropouts, whether white or Negro, were doing a "D" or "F" grade of work. In fact, only 20% of the whites and 12% of the Negroes had averages of "B" or "C," and none had an average of "A." (See table 43, also figure 7.) However, among the non-dropouts differences in academic performance were more apparent, not as much at the extremes in either the "A" or "F" categories as in the "B" and "D" categories. Whites, more frequently than Negroes had a "B" average, whereas Negroes more frequently than whites had a "D" average. (See figure 8.)

FIG. 5

ACADEMIC AVERAGE:
WHITE DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUTS

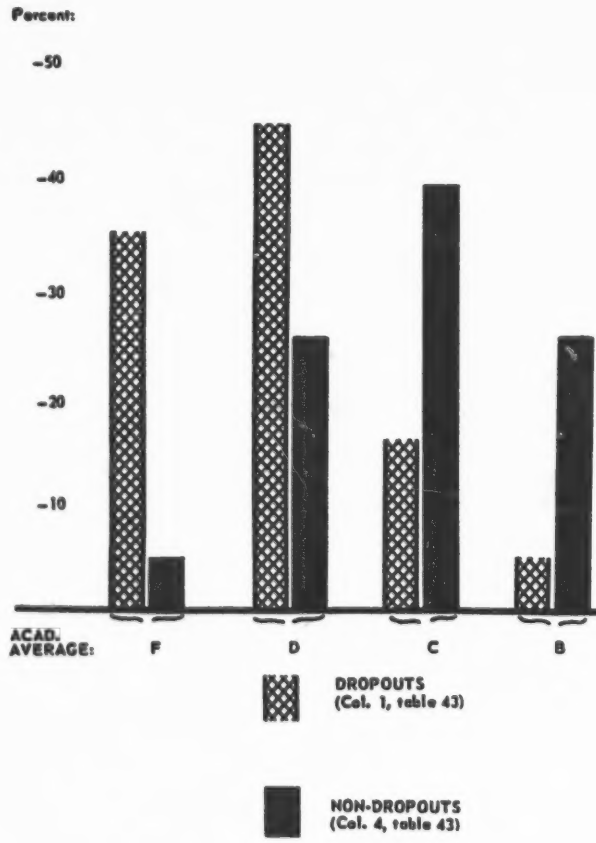


FIG. 6

ACADEMIC AVERAGE
NEGRO DROPOUTS AND NON-DROPOUTS

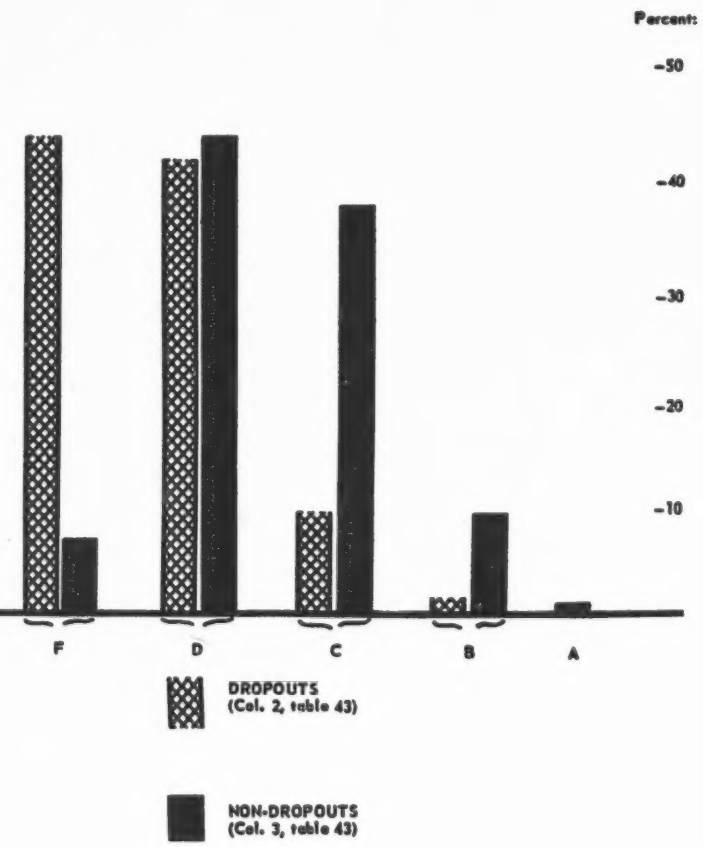


Table 43

ACADEMIC AVERAGE IN SUBJECTS STUDIED

	Dropouts		Non-Dropouts	
	White	Negro	White	Negro
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	233	204	268	277
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
A	—	—	4	1
B	4	2	28	10
C	16	10	39	38
D	45	42	25	44
F (failing)	35	46	4	7

Comparisons of academic averages of the dropouts and non-dropouts within each racial group also demonstrate that pupils showing superior academic performance tend to remain in school, whether white or Negro. (See figures 5 and 6.)

The distribution of academic averages seems fairly consistent with performance on intelligence tests. The Pearsonian coefficient of correlation (r) between academic average and I.Q. was found to be .37 plus or minus .03 for white respondents, and .32 plus or minus .03 for Negro respondents. These correlations seem fairly significant when one considers that the quality of achievement in subject-matter is conditioned by many factors in addition to mental ability.

We also ran a series of tabulations showing the relationship between academic achievement and various socio-economic factors. In most cases, the relationships discovered were similar to those found existing between I.Q. and the various factors. For example, long residence in the state, or family stability as reflected in the respondent living with both parents seemed to exert a positive influence in raising the academic average of Negro respondents. However, higher total family income exerted a more positive influence in raising academic averages than it did with respect to I.Q.'s of Negro respondents. In other words, economic security of the family seemed to operate more directly on academic achievement than on the intelligence quotient – a fact which serves to reemphasize the importance of guaranteeing equality of job opportunity to all racial groups.

Extra-curricular activities and academic average

There seems to be a clear-cut relationship between academic performance and participation in extra-curricular activities. During the course of our interviews, the respondents were asked whether they had participated in "many," "a few," or "no" extra-curricular activities. Consistently, among both white and Negro pupils, the rate of participation was greater for those pupils who maintained a high academic average in their subject-matter. (See table 44.)

Vocational aspirations and academic average

Pupils who aspired toward the professions as vocations did a better grade of work academically than the rank and file of their classmates. However, aspirations of the white pupils in this respect seemed to be

FIG. 7

ACADEMIC AVERAGE:
WHITE AND NEGRO DROPOUTS

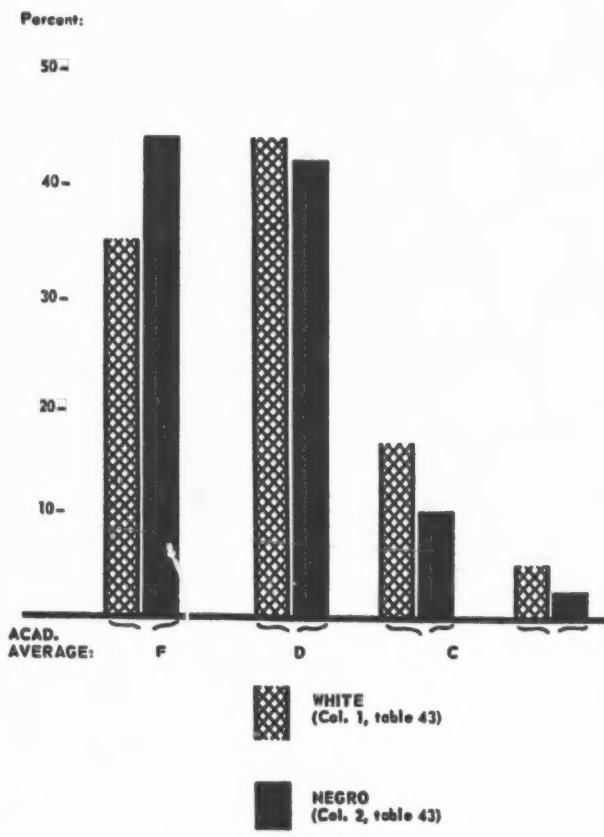
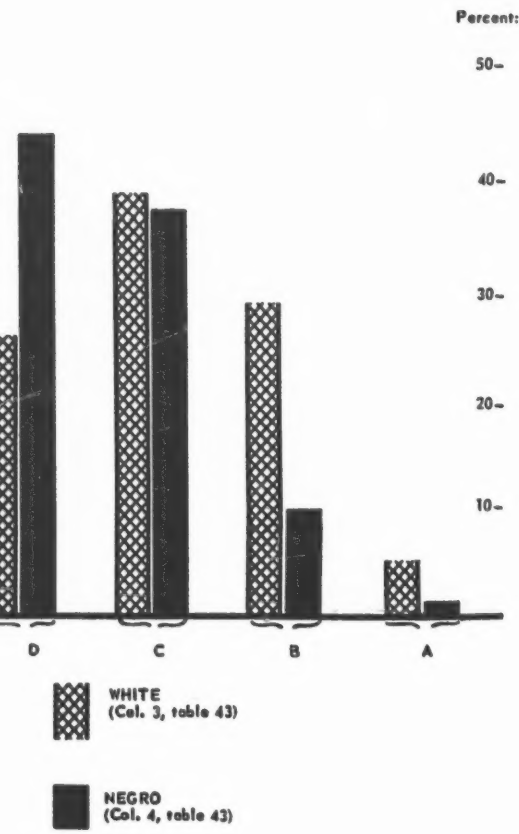


FIG. 8

ACADEMIC AVERAGE:
WHITE AND NEGRO NON-DROPOUTS



better matched with academic performance than was true of the Negro pupils. (See table 45.)

Table 44

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, BY ACADEMIC AVERAGE

	Students who participated in:					
	Many Activities		A few Activities		No Activities	
	White	Negro	White	Negro	White	Negro
	38 (100%)	57 (100%)	160 (100%)	159 (100%)	139 (100%)	133 (100%)
A	5	4	2	1	—	—
B	42	12	20	7	10	5
C	36	26	38	28	22	23
D	11	46	27	42	41	47
F (failing)	6	12	13	22	27	25

Table 45

PROFESSIONAL VOCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS, AND ACADEMIC AVERAGE

	Pupils who expressed an interest in the professions as a vocation	
	White	Negro
	107 (100%)	69 (100%)
A	7	4
B	30	13
C	35	45
D	17	23
F (failing)	11	15

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis of the similarities and differences between white and Negro pupils who felt impelled to terminate their public school education at age 16 or soon thereafter, together with a comparison of whites and Negroes in the same age group who continued their formal education, warrant certain further observations and interpretation for a better understanding of the over-all picture revealed by the findings.

From the standpoint of social science research, the Connecticut locale presented an opportunity to make racial comparisons within the context of a functioning, long-established system of racially integrated public school education. In these schools, whites and Negroes have been, and are studying side by side within a system of equal educational standards and opportunities.

However, we would be remiss if we did not point out that integration within the school system is only one aspect of the total problem of racial integration in the larger community outside the classroom. During the past 15 years, the State Civil Right Commission, with the aid of legislation and the support of enlightened individuals and organizations, has made substantial progress in guaranteeing equal opportunities in employment, public accommodations, and public housing to all races. However, the problems remaining in these specific areas, together with the formidable resistance to the acceptance of Negro families in non-segregated private neighborhoods, are indicative of the fact that the racial integration of Negroes in the total life of the community is a goal not yet achieved in Connecticut. We draw attention to this because the most complete integration within the school cannot immediately cancel out the cumulative effects of discrimination encountered elsewhere nor can it completely erase from the minds of the Negro pupils and their parents the consciousness of an implied racial inferiority.

There is probably very little difference between the proportions of whites and Negroes, age 6-16, who attend public schools, because of the operation of the compulsory school attendance law. However, at age 16 the first real difference between the races emerges. Since we found that 9% of all white pupils and 14% of all Negro pupils dropped out of high school in 1956-57, this would mean that over a four-year interval, if the rate remained constant, about 36% of the whites and 56% of the Negroes would have left school. Even though some of the dropouts might resume their high school education, the net result could well be that about half of the Negro pupils and about a third of the white pupils never complete a four-year high school education. Thus, on the threshold of their careers, a larger proportion of the Negroes than whites start with an initial handicap in lacking a high school diploma.

With limited education, and virtually no experience, these dropouts, whether white or Negro, must accept employment requiring a minimum of skills. In this respect, Negro dropouts seemed to operate at even a greater disadvantage than whites. They found it more difficult to get *any* type of job, and if successful, they were channeled more frequently into unskilled, non-white collar jobs. Negro girls in particular did not enter clerical or sales jobs nearly as frequently as white girls. There is

probably a hard core of racial discrimination involved even after we exclude the larger proportion of Negro girls who married early and therefore were not seeking gainful employment. Our findings on the gainful employment of dropouts, wherein lack of experience is constant for both whites and Negroes, seem to indicate the presence of racial discrimination during the earliest years of the Negroes' entrance into the labor market.

Discrimination in job opportunities characterizes not only the Negro dropouts, but also their parents. Tangible evidence of this was apparent in the fact that the distribution of weekly income of Negro parents with a high school or college education was virtually the same as the distribution for white parents having no more than a grammar school education. Awareness of this condition could certainly have an adverse effect on the motivation of members of the Negro family group.

The existence of a larger proportion of broken homes among the Negro respondents is another criterion that sets them apart from whites. This family instability seems to be associated with lower performance on intelligence tests and lower achievement in courses and is without doubt another factor that compounds the problems of Negro youth in acquiring a basic educational background. Such family instability, of course, exists in juxtaposition with other factors such as inferior, segregated housing and economic insecurity – a type of complex situation in which it would be virtually impossible to determine the cause-effect sequence. However, the correction of tangible inequities in housing and job opportunity would undoubtedly exert a positive influence in the direction of achieving more family stability.

In the matter of school adjustment as measured by relationships with teachers and with classmates, satisfaction with subject-matter, participation in extra-curricular activities, and involvement in disciplinary problems, there were few, if any, significant differences between white and Negro pupils. If a racially integrated school system were unworkable, it would surely show up in this area of personal contact. A factor that might have contributed to this stability was that only 1% of the white pupils were born in the South which meant that there was virtually no possibility of a direct transfer of southern white attitudes of racial superiority.

In the matter of performance on intelligence tests and achievement in courses the evidence is clear that Negro pupils who remained were superior to the Negroes who dropped out, and the white pupils who remained were superior to the whites who left school. In this sense, the schools had succeeded in retaining the better pupils of both racial groups. There is also evidence that white pupils, as a group, demonstrated higher average performance than Negro pupils as a group in intelligence tests and courses, both among the dropouts and non-dropouts. It should be noted, however, that the *range* of Negro performance was quite similar to that of whites, i.e., there were both Negroes and whites among the highest and lowest ranking pupils. After proceeding with a more refined analysis of these over-all group averages, we found that socio-economic factors such as family stability, education of parents, family income, etc., were associated with an increased level of performance when such factors were held constant. Length of residence in Connecticut was especially significant in raising the level of performance of Negro students. Even

though such factors were related to the performance of whites and Negroes alike, i.e., raised the averages in both groups, the existence of such a relationship is particularly important for the future of the Negro group. With a background of disadvantages resulting from discriminatory practices in virtually all aspects of their lives, it is encouraging to note that the realization of equal opportunities could be reflected in higher rates of performance and achievement.

Despite the immediate and long-term benefits that are bound to accrue from the elimination of discriminatory practices against Negroes, we are still faced with the situation of the moment which places Negro dropouts and graduates at a distinct disadvantage in competition with whites. In jobs requiring, let us say, written tests or examinations in order to qualify, Negro applicants on the average would be at some disadvantage in competition with white applicants for reasons similar to those which differentiated Negro from white academic performance in the schools. Also, Negroes who aspired to professional careers would encounter greater barriers in entrance to graduate or professional schools simply because a smaller proportion of them had specialized in college preparatory work in the high schools. As of the moment, Negroes would suffer from these disadvantages more frequently than whites, even if immediate and direct discrimination on the basis of color were eliminated.

Unfortunately, Negroes also suffer from the cumulative effects of discriminatory acts that have taken place in past generations. The elimination of discrimination in employment, housing, etc., will not only benefit the present generation of Negroes but will help to eradicate the inequities that otherwise would afflict successive generations.